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THE LIFE

OF

CHARLES JAMES MATHEWS.

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Maclure & Macdonald

Lith London

CHARLES J. MATHEWS

from an Oil Painting by R. Jones

about 1839.

THE LIFE

OF

CHARLES JAMES MATHEWS

229

CHIEFLY AUTOBIOGRAPHICAL

WITH

SELECTIONS FROM HIS CORRESPONDENCE AND SPEECHES

EDITED BY

CHARLES DICKENS

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In Two Volumes

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CHAPTER I.

SECOND VISIT TO ITALY (*concluded*), 1828-1830.

At this point Mathews's autobiography comes to an abrupt termination, and is not resumed until the period of the great change in his life, seven years afterwards. His letters and fragments of diaries, however, tell the story of this time with sufficient clearness.

After leaving Venice, Mathews and D'Egville took up their residence at Florence, where a sojourn that was to be eventually most delightful had a most inauspicious commencement. Mathews was attacked with small-pox. In the first intimation of his illness which he sent to his mother, he made as light of the matter as possible, only incidentally mentioning it in the following letter:

"Florence, Sept. 28th, 1828.

"My dearest Mother,

"Up to this moment I have had but little enjoyment of this splendid city, for almost immediately

on my arrival I had the ill-luck to catch hold of a fever which is prevalent here. An affair of nothing at all, so make yourself perfectly easy upon the subject, excepting its effect at the time. It is some child's disease that I don't know the name of in English. I suppose scarlatina is the nearest to it, but without the *scarlet*. I am now quite well again. Almost all the English here have had it, and no one thinks anything at all about it.

"I have but little to tell you in consequence about the place, any more than that it perfectly amazes me how I could have been here before, and be so little aware of its magnificence. Let me, however, give you one piece of information that is rather interesting to me and you. Before leaving Venice, we went—on that most unpleasant of all business, the asking a favour from a public body—to the secretary of the Venetian Academy to solicit the honour of being received as members, and were naturally much gratified at his saying to us before we entered upon the subject in question: 'You are the very persons I most wished to see. We have just had the pleasure of electing you members of our Academy. Here are your diplomas,' at the same time handing them to us all sealed and signed, without our even having asked for them, excepting in indirect ways through some of the professors. You may suppose how much pleased we were, and without even the request being made, as at Milan, to leave our drawings. I assure you we cut a respectable figure in their exhibition this year, tho' I

say it that shouldn't. I exhibited two large drawings, one of the Amphitheatre, and the other of the Triumphal Arch at Pola, two magnificent subjects, and D'Egville three—one English subject, one in France, and the third near Venice, and a most beautiful masterly drawing, by far the best he has made while abroad. So far so good. I only hope we may be as fortunate here at Florence. I assure you, *entre nous*, I tremble about it, for they have got the name of most terrible Turks.

"Your most affectionate Son,

"C. J. M."

Three weeks afterwards he wrote: "I have not wished to let you know anything about it, as it was expected to prove the small-pox every day. However, there is no danger of that now, and I am almost well;" and it was not until his complete convalescence that the full truth was told. No permanent ill effects followed the disorder, but it was long before the anxious mother could be persuaded that all was well.

In Florence Mathews now stayed for some months, enjoying perhaps the happiest time he had ever yet spent. The beautiful city on the Arno was at that period the resort of many English families of distinction, "in whose absorbing society I am afraid our studies were too frequently interfered with," says Mathews. "Dinners, *déjeûners*, balls, operas, concerts, plays, masquerades, races, picnics, succeeded each other in

such rapid profusion that we lived in a constant whirl of pleasure." Lord Burghersh, the British minister, was at the head of all this gaiety, and the performances of Italian operas at his house were among the most successful entertainments of the season. Mathews had the honour of making his first appearance as a chorus-singer on those occasions.

But it was in another English house that Mathews was most at home, and it was by another English nobleman that the inclination which he always, almost unconsciously, had towards the stage was in a great measure confirmed. Lord and Lady Normanby received the young man with the utmost kindness and consideration, and Mathews describes their Palazzo San Clementi as the "delightful and never to be forgotten Elysium of Lord and Lady Normanby," declaring himself unable to trust himself to speak of the "hours of happiness passed under the protecting shadow of their kindness."

In the Palazzo San Clementi Lord Normanby had built a theatre, in which a constant succession of plays were presented by a company of amateurs, who have been frequently described as possessing unusual merit. Of these entertainments Mathews speaks in enthusiastic terms. "Here was a theatre," he wrote later, "as regularly conducted and carefully managed as any public establishment in Europe. All the accessories of scenery, properties, dresses, and decorations, were not only lavish and costly, but strictly appropriate and

correct. Of all the managers I have ever served under I will boldly name Lord Normanby as the best; and I have no hesitation in asserting that we had among us many actors who would have been most valuable acquisitions to the best theatres in the kingdom." It was not long before Mathews joined the company and took his part, and a very active part too, in the "agreeable rehearsals, the exciting performances, and the brilliant suppers that wound up the night."

A long list of parts played by him under Lord Normanby's management includes Peter in "Romeo and Juliet," Risk in "Love Laughs at Locksmiths," Dogberry, Tony Lumpkin, Adam in "The Iron Chest," Buskin in "Killing no Murder," Falstaff in "King Henry the Fourth," and many more, testifying amply to the industry and versatility of the young actor.

But it was not without hesitation that Mathews allowed himself to enter upon this dramatic apprenticeship, as it may be called, and his difficulties on the point were very fully laid before his mother in a letter of the 7th November, 1828. "Lord Normanby has begun his private plays here, but, altho' he has sent me invitations regularly, my illness has prevented me from using any of them; and this morning, he has put me quite to a nonplus, and a very unpleasant one, by sending me a long and most urgent request to play Karl to-morrow night in 'The Miller and his Men.' I instantly wrote word back that not only was I quite

certain of my father's extreme anger, if he heard of my acting, but explaining to him what I know would certainly be the case should it reach the people's ears in England, as it certainly would; how many ill-natured remarks would be made upon it—'Gone to Italy to study, and is acting plays instead'—and I have just got his answer assuring me that he had mentioned it to my father at Doncaster, who had given his permission. . . . If I do it, it will be with fear and trembling. Of course I have no other objection but that stated, and I hardly know how to refuse him after all his kindness, but I dread to think what might be said of it in England."

There was not much to fear from the elder Mathews's displeasure; indeed, after the successful performance at the English Opera House in 1822, he had tried to persuade Charles to adopt the stage as a profession; and reassuring messages on that score being speedily received from home, and the remaining scruples being easily overcome, Lord Normanby's company obtained a new and valuable recruit. With characteristic energy and impetuosity Mathews went into the business, and not content with playing everything that came in his way, distinguished himself highly as scene-painter, stage-carpenter, and designer of costumes.

The following extracts from many long letters, written to his mother at this time, give his own account of these festivities, and of his own share in them:

"January 16th, 1829, Florence.

"Since my last letter I have not had one moment, I may safely say, left free for writing, for you must know that D'Egville and I have been working in a *practical* way at Lord Normanby's, having, since you last heard from me, re-arranged—I may almost say *rebuilt—his theatre.* You may imagine how delightful the task has been, and at the same time conceive the trouble it has occasioned, from the urgent necessity of its being completed with all possible dispatch, on account of the shortness of his season (as he most managerially expresses it) and his return to England. It was opened, then, a day or two ago, and the time since has been taken up with a few necessary alterations; though I am pleased to tell you that it has not only delighted himself and Lady Normanby, but met with hearty commendation from everybody. The first proposal of the business came from Lady Normanby, who is a pet that you would love most sincerely, and though, of course, the first object in the business was to please Lord Normanby, who was dying to do it, I verily believe that her next desire was to gratify us. It happened as follows. I had been one morning making her a sketch from recollection of the Arch at Pola, and was afterwards mentioning my fear that, from the number of people who visited the theatre, more would be convinced of my readiness to assist in acting for them, than of my having any profession of

more consequence to employ my time, my fears that my name might be published in England, &c. &c. &c.; when she said, as if seized with a sudden thought: 'In answer to all you say, I can only tell you that not one soul has spoken to me of your acting to whom I have not instantly replied, "Yes, but you should see his drawings!", and I am now going to ask you a favour in return for the pains I have taken in sounding the trumpet of your fame. Take the trouble off my hands and blow it yourself. Lord Normanby has, for three seasons, been teazing me to enlarge the theatre and rebuild it in a more commodious form, but I have refused myself the pleasure of satisfying both his and my wish on account of the expense, which is greater than we ought to afford. Now, if you won't object to the pains of making me a pretty drawing of the proscenium, for my album, and direct the workmen, you and Mr. D'Egville shall have the whole merit or demerit of the new theatre, as I promise you that neither I nor Normanby shall fetter you in your design or the execution of it, provided you spare no effort in making it worthy of yourselves, and large enough; for you are to play Falstaff in it the first night.' We were transported at the idea, and the compliments we have received for the manner of its execution are most delightful. Not one objection was made, and everything went perfectly to our satisfaction, and, what is better, theirs. Not an ornament was suppressed, or any

alterations wished, down even to the bronze vases which were ordered to be made on purpose, after our drawings, of plaster-of-paris. The attentions we have received from the moment we arrived here have been beyond all I can describe. Three times a week on the average we have dined with them, and in that quiet snug way that is so pleasant and so English. Quiet cosy evenings, sketching and talking, with no boring to show off in any way, without even being once asked to sing. Lord Normanby is a very clever and most agreeable man, and as for Lady N. and her sister, Lady Williamson, I am in love with them both. They are, of all people I have ever seen, made to please *you*—perfectly accomplished in every way, beautiful; and never did I see in any rank of society creatures so natural and free from affectation. We spent a most happy Christmas Day there, and not only did *I*, but *they*, often declare that we only wanted you and my father to make us complete. What enjoyment it would then have been, for it was a day calculated for you of all others. The party consisted only of their own family and one or two particular friends (like ourselves—hem!); and in the evening a children's ball in the other rooms. All sorts of little games for them went on, in which those that liked might partake, for I must mention that lots of people came in the evening—Lord Wellesley, Lord Douro, Lord and Lady Warwick, &c. &c. (who were not of sufficient consequence to dine there—hem! again); and one little trait

among a thousand I must mention of dear Lady N.'s kindness. D'Egville gained, in one of the raffles, a splendid Turkish tobacco-bag, and was jokingly parading it in triumph before my eyes, upon which Lady Normanby left the room, and in a moment returned, saying, 'Never mind him, Mr. Mathews, here's one I'll give you, that you may spoil his vain boasting without the trouble of raffling; and though it is not really Turkish, it is made in imitation, is much handsomer, and I hope you will not think it less valuable as I worked it myself.' You know, my dearest mother, that by mentioning these details, I do not wish to impress you with what a wonderful person I am to merit all this, as it might appear to a stranger, but that I am anxious to let you see how happy I am in the friendship of such fascinating and truly friendly people."

"Jan. 17, 1829, Florence.

"Behold me in clean sheets then (it is worth remarking, not being so common a thing in this country as in England), and will quickly resume my warming-pan subject to prevent their getting cold. As the dwelling too long on it may render it at length uninteresting to you, I will diversify it by some account of the theatricals which I have never yet mentioned, except casually, merely assuring you that the warmth of my admiration is not entirely caused by the partiality for the charming family which their great attentions

have inspired me with, but is in unison with the feeling of everybody who knows them, always, of course, excepting the cold heartless comments of the young sprigs of fashion, whose only title to wit consists in speaking disparagingly of everything and everybody. The gusto of the present age is abuse; and to join in praise of anything that is by common consent allowed to be worthy of admiration is by far too degrading a step to be followed in these enlightened times. The truth of this observation is nowhere so striking or so perfectly illustrated as in the famous gallery here, where the most splendid standards of the highest attainments in the arts of painting and sculpture are daily depreciated and scoffed at by these pretended connoisseurs, many of whom never set eyes upon a picture or a statue before, and whose sole claim to originality is by laughing at the old masters, and deciding always in opposition to received opinions. But to return.

"First of all you must know that our new theatre contains about two hundred people, and the stage is exactly the same depth and width as the Haymarket. With regard to the plays and the acting of them, I may safely say that no private theatre ever before attempted the thing in such perfection as it is here done, and (perhaps excepting the 'Kilkenny,' which I cannot speak of) certainly, out of London, no theatre is conducted with such care and attention. When I

mention a succession of such plays as 'Much Ado About Nothing,' 'Richard the Third,' 'Romeo and Juliet,' 'Henry the Fourth,' 'Macbeth,' with all the original music, and such afterpieces as 'The Miller and his Men,' 'Love Laughs at Locksmiths,' 'Clari,' &c., at intervals of a fortnight, with new scenery always painted for the occasion from good drawings, and all the costumes made from sketches by an English painter here from pictures in the gallery according to the correct examples of the time, I think you will allow that in no private theatre such things were ever heard of before. Add to this that Lord Normanby is himself an actor that might at any time supply Charles Kemble's place with credit, considerably resembling him too on the stage, and moreover understands thoroughly all the management of the theatre, superintending the scene-painters, machinists, lighting, everything, with an experience of twelve years, having had an annual season regularly during that period. Even if private theatres — the 'Kilkenny' for instance—have in all these matters equalled, they could not surpass, the present one. I now come to a part of it that even that far-famed one did not attempt to supply—I mean the female characters, which, in every other concern, are undertaken by professional people. This is one of the great charms here. I do not scruple to say that Lady Normanby is the sweetest actress I have ever seen, and I am backed by the opinion of everyone that her Juliet has never

been more beautifully done. In arch characters, such as Beatrice, it is impossible to see a better representative, because she has in her own natural elegance of manner one quality almost unattainable on the stage. Add to all this, her singing and that of her sister, Lady Williamson (who is a charming actress also in certain parts), is perfection. I am afraid you will think I am laying it on thick, but anyone who has seen the plays here will confirm all I say. 'The Miller and his Men' was as well done as at Covent Garden, if not better, for certainly in addition to the beautiful scenery, blow-up, &c., our Lady N. and her sister must be allowed to throw a charm over it which Mrs. Egerton and Miss S. Booth never could. The Masquerade Scene in 'Romeo and Juliet' was quite enchanting; all the lovely English girls here of high fashion, dressed in most beautiful fancy costumes, performed the dance in a manner that captivated everybody. 'Simpson and Co.'* followed, and you have no idea how well it was done, or how very well it looked upon

* "Simpson and Co." naturally found a place in the bill on this occasion. Mathews described it in a letter to his mother, August 31, 1824, as "my favourite farce. . . . When we got to Liverpool it was acting there. When I arrived in Dublin, Dowton was playing in it. At Paris I found it again under the name of 'Les Deux Ménages,' and last night I found it acting at a small theatre in Naples, and called 'Due Case in Una Casa.' It is equally good in all languages and in all lands."

the bills which are regularly printed, and which I have preserved.

Mr. Simpson	... ...	MR. MATHEWS.
Mr. Bromley	... ...	LORD NORMANBY.
Mrs. Simpson	... ...	LADY NORMANBY.
Mrs. Bromley	... ...	LADY WILLIAMSON.
Mrs. Fitzallan	... ...	MISS GERALDINE DE COURCY.
Madame La Trappa	... ...	THE MARCHIONESS PUCCI.

"Of my Simpson or Lord Normandy's Bromley, I say nothing—they are *things of course*; but I must say that not even Mrs. Glover could equal Lady N.'s Mrs. Simpson, and I can say no more than that in the way of praise. Lady W. was charming as Mrs. Bromley, and played it as well as it is possible to be played; and as for the Marchesa Pucci, a French lady who spoke her own broken English, it was the prettiest thing ever heard. She is, in addition, both young and beautiful, and all those who were not in love with her before were completely so after seeing her in Madame La Trappa. I dressed it of course the same as Terry did, excepting that I wore nankeen smalls and continuations instead of brown, which I think looked better. You can't think how sanctified I looked. One little accident during 'Romeo and Juliet' I must mention. A Mr. Morrice was prompting the last act, which it was feared had much need of it, though it turned out otherwise. This gentleman was a physician, and it so happened that

on the breaking open the tomb a young lady in front was seized with screaming-fits, either from being really affected strongly, or from strong affectation (for Lady N. still believes it to have been done out of compliment to her), upon which Mr. M. started up and was about to rush into the house when he was instantly collared by Mr. Cornewall, one of the actors, of gigantic dimensions and strong feelings. 'Where are you going, sir?' 'To assist the lady that's ill.' 'No, sir; why, you must prompt.' 'But, sir, I am a physician.' 'I can't help that; you are prompter here, and, by G—, prompt you shall,' at the same time thrusting him down on his stool and keeping guard over him.

"Well, and so. To proceed. After the alteration of the theatre the first part of Henry the Fourth was got up, and this same gigantic Mr. Cornewall, who by-the-bye is a Plantagenet, was offered most liberally by Lord Normanby his choice of Hotspur or the Prince, the former of which he chose, and the greatest sensation was produced by such an announcement, for, as he was the only person who had been exceedingly severe in his criticisms upon Lord Normanby's acting, and evidently seemed to imply that he himself was infinitely superior, the moment was arrived to fulfil the expectations he had raised. Now it so happened that Sir Robert Lawley, Lord Albert Cunnyngham's uncle, and a great man here, begged as a favour to be allowed to play Worcester,

than which nothing could be more ridiculous, as his whole appearance, manner, and utterance are so eminently ludicrous that it appeared to be a fit of madness that induced him to request it. However, he would not be refused, and ordered two most splendid dresses, one of gilt chain armour, to be made for this occasion. Cornewall, whose temper I told you before was none of the sweetest, was frantic at the idea of having anything to do with him, but at last hit upon a plan to get rid of the annoyance. He got Sir Hedworth Williamson to understudy the part in case of the non-appearance of Sir Robert, and tried to get someone to invite him out to dinner on the day of the play and make him drunk, which it appears a couple of glasses can easily effect. His intention then was to have him put to bed and place his chain armour by his side, that, on his waking in the morning, he might be persuaded he had really played the part, in which belief the compliments of his friends were to confirm him. No one, however, was to be found to undertake the execution of this scheme, which he was therefore obliged to abandon, and the evening arrived without any other being hit on. Eight o'clock at length struck and we were all assembled in the green-room ready to begin, the theatre crowded to excess, and everything in readiness except Sir Robert. The overture was twice played, but still he did not make his appearance, and at last we began to believe that Cornewall had really contrived to carry his threat into

execution. He, however, declared his perfect innocence, and showed by his furious gestures and hurried paces that he felt no less than the rest the predicament, particularly as nearly all his scenes depended considerably upon Worcester. After waiting till nine, Lord Normanby, whose good temper under such trying events is quite surprising, determined we should begin without him, in the hope that during the scene of Falstaff and the Prince he might make his appearance, and on we went. You may suppose the delightful nervousness of our first scene under such a calamity; however, all went off most charmingly; but alas! at the end of the scene Sir Robert was still wanting, and the curtain was obliged to be dropped. All was consternation. Cornewall's fury knew no bounds, and in a fit of rage he rushed to the stage-door to inform the audience of the cause of the delay, but the prompter luckily reached it before him and made the apology in most technical language, while Cornewall was with difficulty held as he struggled to rush on the stage at the same time. 'Is that the apology that ought to be made for the old ass? Indulgence indeed! Let me go—I'll tell them all about it.' 'Why what would you have him say?' said someone to him. 'Why this is what should be said, and nothing shall prevent me from going on and saying it: Ladies and Gentlemen, you may sit there till the day of judgment, I can tell you, for that old Lawley isn't come, and I only hope that

he has broken his neck!' It was with difficulty he could be persuaded that such language was not at all dramatic, or permitted by the licenser, but at length the arrival of the old gentleman somewhat appeased him, and the play went off triumphantly. Various causes were assigned for Sir Robert's delay, but the true one I believe was at last discovered to be rather a funny one. It seems that the gallant Worcester, upon beholding himself in the glass in his armour of gold chain, was so charmed with his appearance that he could not resist gratifying a certain *chère amie* of his with the sight of his martial mien, which had caused a small hour's delay to the great discomfiture of the Plantagenet. Cornewall, although certainly a good actor, found it a much more easy task to criticise than to perform, and he not only succeeded in convincing the audience of his great inferiority to Lord Normanby, who had ceded him his own part for the display, but also in considerably invalidating his future criticisms, by giving ocular proof that he was not so *au fait* at acting as he wished it to be believed. I played Falstaff, and though I am not vain enough to believe that it was 'the best ever heard,' as people were fulsome enough to say, I don't hesitate to say that it 'was the best ever seen,' that is, upon the stage, for no one can deny the dress of the stage Falstaff is the most vulgar clown in a pantomime sort of costume that can be imagined. It is certain that Shakspeare intended

him for an old beau, and why therefore he should be dressed in a great shapeless coat, completely different from the costume of the time and from that of every other person on the stage with him, I can't think. I had also another advantage which no Falstaff has ever had, I mean in the mode I adopted for stuffing myself. I borrowed all the air cushions which could be mustered in Florence, by which means I blew myself up to exactly the shape I wished, which no sitting down or falling could put out of form, and which moreover were so exceedingly light that I did not even feel that I had anything more on than my ordinary dress. Another point, that I do not remember to have been attended to before, was the casing him in a cuirass and helmet in his battle-scenes, and abandoning his dandy cloak, the effect of which was extremely good. Upon the whole this play was certainly in point of scenery, dresses, and acting (with the exception of Sir Robert, who, however, was much better than anyone could have imagined), by far the most perfect of any yet done. One or two foreigners by-the-bye observed that it was the first play they had ever seen that was in six acts, mistaking the dropping of the curtain after the first scene for the end of an act.

"Two more plays concluded the season. There were 'She Stoops to Conquer' and 'The Iron Chest.' Every scene in the latter was new and very effective, particularly the Gothic library and the ruined abbey

by moonlight, which would not have disgraced Covent Garden itself. I played Tony Lumpkin, which is a delightful part, and Adam Winterton, which is a regular beast, particularly as I had Sampson Rawbold, with a song, given me at first, but which, in consequence of the illness of the primitive Adam, I was obliged to relinquish. The farce was 'Killing no Murder,' which I altered in order to make a part for Lord Normanby and one also for Lady Normanby, which were effected and acted with great success; indeed the whole farce went off better than any that had been done, and terminated the season brilliantly. Lady Normanby was a low-comedy Yorkshire girl, with a dialect, instead of 'Fanny,' which she played delightfully; and Lord Normanby, as he declared his inability to play Apollo Belvi, and his wish also for a Yorkshire part, had it changed into a half sort of gentleman actor, preserving all the fun of Apollo, with a new scene and two most super-excellent dresses, and I think decidedly the most original thing he has done. It was one roar from beginning to end. A little surprise of mine added much to the pleasure of the evening. Lord Normanby had frequently expressed a regret that there was no drop-scene to his theatre, as the green curtain was a great damper between the acts. So, without saying a word, I made a sketch from a favourite point of Lady Normanby's, of a view of Florence, composing a rich arcade covered with arabesques as its foreground, and had a drop painted and put up without their know-

ledge. You may fancy how pleased I was at being in the private box with Lady N. when it first fell, and how gratified in the enjoyment of her surprise and admiration. It was very much applauded by the audience, and thought not only beautiful but exceedingly appropriate. It was very delightful for D'Egville and myself to receive the thanks and expressions of esteem for our assistance to them in their favourite hobby, and to find that when we were no longer useful to them their friendship and kindness were rather increased than diminished, as their great attentions to us ever since have manifested. My drop-scene, which was a profound secret even from D'Egville, was one of the few surprises which succeed perfectly, and has been frequently exhibited since to visitors who were not present on the night. Lord Burghersh was particularly complimentary about it. Altogether, I look upon these half-dozen plays as most lucky occurrences for us, as it has procured us, independent of the pleasure of them, the society and friendship of two of the most charming persons I ever knew, and what is still better, not a mere casual acquaintance, but I hope a durable one. You have no idea of the kind manner in which they have treated us ever since. One instance, among many, is afforded by the friendly manner in which Lady Normanby begged that whenever one of us dined out without the other—which of course sometimes happens—that the uninvited one would come to them. In short, nothing can be half

so good-natured as they are. And now, as I think I have given you a tolerable dose of the Normanbys and their plays, I shall proceed to give you some account of the other gaieties of Florence. First, then, you must know that Lord Burghersh, who possesses, I suppose you are aware, great musical talents, beginning to think that his guests might begin to be tired of concerts—which in fact everybody did think the greatest bores in the world—determined to erect a theatre and give his operas all the assistance of dresses, scenes, &c. &c. His opera was 'Il Torneo,' or The Tournament, and was executed entirely by amateurs, in a style worthy of a larger theatre. The opera was exceedingly pretty, and the choruses particularly good. A Miss Williams, an English girl, was the prima donna, and all the other singers were Italians. The choruses were made up of about thirty female singers, and the same number of males, and contained almost all the pretty English girls in Florence, splendidly dressed, and forming a brilliant *coup d'œil*. The theatre was crowded every night, and Lord Burghersh was the happiest of men. The opera was repeated five or six times, and then laid aside, upon which Lady Burghersh, at the instigation chiefly of Cornewall, began to grieve at the theatre being pulled down so soon, after all the trouble and expense of erecting it, and threw out various and sundry hints to the Normanbys that she should like to get up just one play, that is, if they would not consider it as encroaching

upon their rights. Lord Normanby, who knew well enough the object with which it was done, so far from objecting, furthered the business in every way, feeling quite secure that he had nothing to fear from the rivalry, and, consequently, rather anxious that Cornewall should have an opportunity of exhibiting himself. Accordingly, 'The School for Scandal' was chosen, and put into rehearsal. Cornewall was Sir Peter; Lady Burghersh, Lady Teazle; Lord Douro, Joseph Surface; and Aubin, Charles: among whom, before the first rehearsal was over, a civil war broke out. Each wished to be manager, all had different ideas upon the subject, and none of them knew anything about the matter. The difference of the rival houses was well described, the one as a 'mild despotism,' the other, a 'turbulent republic.' I was lugged in for Sir Benjamin Backbite.

"Hardly had these entertainments been concluded when Madame Bombelles, the wife of the Austrian Minister, formed the idea of contributing her mite to the conviviality of the festive scene, and in her turn erected a theatre in her house and got up an opera which completely eclipsed the one at our Minister's. She selected Rossini's 'Italiana in Algieri,' which naturally was calculated to surpass the composition of an amateur, and undertook the part of the prima donna herself. She is one of the most finished singers in Italy, and enchanted everyone by her sweetness and

science. The whole thing was the gayest, most brilliant treat that ever was done. The music alone, independent almost of the singers, would carry anything through, and it was really executed as well as it could be done at any regular opera. It was repeated six times, and is to be replaced, I believe, by the 'Barbiere di Siviglia.' These amateur performances completely carried the bell away from the regular operas, which have been completely deserted, and indeed are very inferior in merit. I had expected that Florence would have furnished one of the best in Italy, but, on the contrary, it is one of the worst, even Venice furnishing one of a very superior description. However, Lablache is expected in Lent, who perhaps may retrieve it a little, though the singers by whom he will be supported are execrable. The French Ambassador next took into his head that he ought not altogether to be left out in all these amusements, and accordingly gave out that he intended to get up some French plays at his house. Lots of people quickly enlisted, and it was conjectured that these performances would have been first-rate, but, unluckily, the various actors and actresses engaged adopted the same course as those at Lord Burghersh's, and, after about a week's rehearsal, the poor Minister was obliged to resign all pretentions, and abandon the field, in despair of ever establishing the peace among his unruly subjects, who would all be kings and queens or nothing. I think I have now pretty well exhausted all

their fine doings, which I fear may have been somewhat tedious in the recital. I am now going to Fiesole to alter a villa for a Mr. Moyne, where I shall be engaged most probably for a fortnight or three weeks; I hope, too, not *unlucratively*, so that you must make this letter do till I come back. I shall perhaps have means of sending from thence, it being close to Florence in the mountains, in which case you will hear before, but don't expect it.

"Ever, my dearest Mother,

"Your affectionate Son,

"C. J. MATHEWS.

"Best love to my dear father."

From Florence, Mathews and D'Egville proceeded to Rome, where, before taking their diplomas at St. Luke's Academy, they remained studying for a year, broken by a flying visit of the former to London, and, on his return to Italy, to Lady Blessington and Count D'Orsay —the Earl of Blessington had died suddenly a few months before—in Paris. Here he was again taken ill, and, although the matter was not serious, it delayed his return to Italy for some time and caused him considerable annoyance.

A much more serious trouble, however, was in store for him. The summer of 1830 brought the end of the stay in Italy, and Mathews and D'Egville were to leave Venice together for Vienna. When the appointed time

arrived, however, Mathews was too unwell to travel, and his friend, being obliged to be in Vienna on a certain day, went on without him, leaving Mathews to follow after a few days. Imprudent exposure to the night air on the lagoons, however, had worked its usual mischief, and a malarious fever, with rheumatic complications, effectually put a stop to any further travelling for that while. The patient suffered very severely, and for three months was entirely deprived of the use of his limbs. It is probable that only the devoted attention of his Italian servant, Nanini, carried him through the crisis. That this was the outcome of a long period of ill-health, there is little doubt. Mathews, indefatigable pedestrian as he then was, had, some little while before, entirely broken down on a walking tour in the neighbourhood of Naples, and had suffered from unaccountable stiffness and pains in the limbs. No doubt the rheumatism which crippled him for so long was then for the first time making itself felt.

The wonderful power of "go," and the capacity for work which were always so characteristic of the man, did not desert him in this extremity. A letter of August 28th, 1830, after describing a painful amount of physical suffering, goes on to say: "To amuse myself on my back I found difficult at first, but a happy idea has furnished me the means, with benefit I hope to myself. I took it into my head that it would be a good opportunity to learn German, as I have a friend

here who offered to exchange some of his German for some of my English, and I have already had some lessons in this friendly way. I am delighted at the prospect of knowing something of this fine language, and already begin to see my way a little—can read, and have a good pronunciation, two good points to begin with. Independent of the pleasure of acquiring the language, it is of infinite service in rousing me from the lethargic drowsiness which is the consequence of this scirocco"—he had previously complained that the most terrible scirocco ever known had rendered Venice insupportable for some time past—"and preventing me from sleeping all day like a lump of lead. In short, I pass the time as pleasantly as it can be passed without friends." A month later; after having had to undergo surgical operations for tumours on the legs, with which he had been sorely afflicted, and after having suffered agonies of pain, which are only hinted at in his letter; he still had courage enough to describe his state to his mother with something like his usual good spirits:

"Venice, Sunday, Sept. 26, 1830.

"I was yesterday pronounced *cured*, but this *cure*, like the free post lately granted to Venice, is with many restrictions. All medical hostilities are suspended, and, in short, my complaint is at an end. But what remains behind? The vestiges of severe colds, caught 'one atop of t'other,' &c. Rheumatic pains in my legs

and feet, which, together with great weakness from long lying in a horizontal position, prevent my almost moving. Similar pains in my arms and the back of my hands, swelled glands causing slight ear-aches, and similar delights, so that, although *cured*, I have still something to get rid of before I am well. What I now most require is fine weather to bring me round, it being exceedingly damp and rainy, and an almost unceasing scirocco blowing which prevents me from shaking off my cold. Time is all that the doctor seems to require to restore me, which unluckily is the only thing which I would not willingly grant. In short, he has declared my moving to be impossible before the end of October, and I fear it will turn out so, though my heart sinks at the idea of delay. However, there is nothing now but time and patience which can be of any avail. I have begun to shuffle about the room, and have the window occasionally opened, and feel convinced that if some fine dry weather would come, which ought to be invariable at this season in Italy, I should make rapid advances. It is the general opinion that I show very little evidence in the face of having been so long confined, and, indeed I don't perceive that I am much thinner; except in my lower man, where there is a woful falling off. I dwindle down like a peg-top, and have a regular No. 11 pair of legs. However, they tell me that the recovery of my calves will be very speedy, as they are the first to go and the first to return. It was by accident I observed them

a few days ago on getting out of bed. Nanini had just put on my stockings, and I almost thought he had put them on his own legs instead of mine—I positively did not know them. But I must put an abrupt period to this, as some people are just come in to see me, and are staring at me with all their eyes till I finish.

"C. J. M."

A week later he was able to write:

"Venice, Oct. 3, 1830.

"Good news at last. On Wednesday I refrained from writing, because I had nothing pleasant to say. I felt anything but better, and was in very low spirits in consequence; so I put it off in hopes of having better news to-day, and I am happy to say I am not disappointed. You will, then, be rejoiced to hear that, the weather having changed to very fine, the effect produced on my system has been instantaneous, and yesterday, for the first time, I was dressed and went out in a gondola! I suffered, of course, a good deal of pain in going up and down stairs from weakness and from the complaint in my tendons, knees, &c. &c.; but the attempt was successful. It's true that there is not much difference between a gondola and a sofa, but still the going into the air and the exertion of walking to and from the boat altogether makes it one point gained. The first step is taken; I feel still better to-day, and am to repeat the

dose. I am in excellent spirits, and most sanguine in my hopes of being very soon in state to begin my journey. My impatience is beyond everything to get off. In my next I even hope to be able to mention something fixed as to the manner of travelling, route, &c. Your affectionate letters have acted as a balm to all my sufferings and anxieties, and I do nothing but read them over and over again. . . . Give my best love to my dear father, and with ardent prayers for our speedy meeting,

"Believe me, my dearest Mother,

"Ever your most affectionate Son,

"C. J. MATHEWS."

The improvement, however, was more apparent than real, a change in the weather threw him back again, and it was not for another month that he was able to leave Venice. Even then the experiment was dangerous, and the result doubtful, but as Mathews writes: "As I had no notion of dying there all alone away from my family and friends, I made up my mind to run the risk of removal, bought a travelling carriage, and attended by my faithful Italian servant, who had been with me throughout my Italian pilgrimage, started for England utterly helpless and propped up with pillows, carried in and out like a child."

Two letters written *en route* will give some idea of the journey that lay between the sufferer and home.

"MILAN!!!

"Nov. 11th, 1830.

"I hope to give you an agreeable surprise by announcing my arrival here instead of my departure only from Venice. I am as well, if not better, after my journey than before it, in spite of the dreadful weather I have had all the way—rain, incessantly, accompanied by the densest fog and damp in every shape. The principal point is ascertained: that the motion of the carriage does me good instead of harm; indeed in place of the usual longing of invalids to arrive at the inn, I long to get into the carriage again. I owe everything to its being so comfortable, and as long as I remain in it I am free from all pain. I dread the inns and the damp sheets; for spite of fires and warming-pans used in my sight, I can hardly persuade myself that Italian linen *can* be dried. I am in the highest possible spirits at having shaken off all my doctors—or leeches as old authors called them—capital name for mine, who have sucked my purse dry. A most extraordinary occurrence in the history of my complaint I must relate to you. Two days previous to my starting the weather was miserable, and I consequently much worse; indeed, on the Tuesday morning I almost believed myself incapable of undertaking the journey. I took courage, however, in consequence of a kind friend's insisting on accompanying me as far as Padua to see how I sustained the fatigue, and

half carried, half supporting myself on crutches (for notwithstanding their ill-sounding name I determined to adopt them), I was with great difficulty and pain poked, pushed, and pulled into a gondola, hauled, tugged, and lugged up the steps, and at length hoisted and pummelled into the carriage. I only went as far as Padua the first day, a distance of five-and-twenty miles, when, conceive my astonishment on arriving at the inn at finding myself capable, with merely the help of a hand under each shoulder, of mounting the stairs with ease to myself, and standing on my legs for a few minutes *alone!* At dinner, without thinking what I was about, I took up my roll and broke it in half, which my hands had not been able to do for a month past, and on looking at my fingers I found the swelling almost imperceptible. All my joints were more or less free from pain, and I really began to think that a miracle had been performed by the motion of the carriage; but the next morning I found all in *statu quo*. Now though my pains and the swelling of my fingers have returned to their usual sticking place, this extraordinary change, though only momentary, gives me great hopes that with fine weather I may improve much. At any rate I am on my road home; enough for me that I get there, when I feel confident I shall soon be cured. I pray to God you and my dear father may not think the price at which that benefit is purchased too great. My illness has been a dear one in all respects, but I could not have stayed away

the winter under all the circumstances, and I could not get away except as I have done. When things are desperate, desperate means must be used.

"C. J. M."

"Paris, November 23rd, 1830.

"Quite well and not much fatigued. After reposing a couple of days at Milan, whence I wrote to you, I proceeded on my journey, passed Mont Cenis most prosperously in the night, as warm as a toast, and arrived here last night, having remained the last few nights in the carriage. You will wonder at my choosing to travel all night, but I have such a horror of inns, having suffered so much in them, that I prefer by far the former plan, and am even less fatigued. I'll just tell you what I had to go through in them all. The carriage stops, and the landlady appears, all politeness and determination to have me out. 'Would the gentleman like to alight?' 'Very much, ma'am; but the gentleman can't.' 'Oh, our porter is strong enough to carry two like monsieur.' I tremble at the idea of his hug. I then ask if she has a room on the ground-floor, or one with few stairs. '*Oui, Monsieur. Jean! No.* 16, *au quatrième.*' Out rushes Jean, an athlete in a blue smock frock and white night-cap, bursting with strength and health, chuckling at the fun, and impatient to get at me. Unfortunately I have not yet emptied my head of Italian, and in vain I call to him not to touch me, for

before I can recollect that I ought to have warned him in French, he grips me in his vice of a hand till I roar again. Conveyed upstairs by Nanini and my friend in the nightcap, and deposited on a hard wooden arm-chair, with my feet on a brick floor, comes the dinner, which, in spite of my prayers for a boiled fowl and nothing more, is enough for ten people. After this empty ceremony I ask the dreadful question if the sheets are well aired. 'Oh, as dry as a bone.' I insist upon seeing them, and find them positively smoking from damp. Then comes the tug of war, for there is no word in French or Italian that can convey to the natives the meaning of 'damp.' '*Humide*' and '*umido*' mean wet. 'Ma'am, these sheets are not dry.' 'Oh, monsieur, that's quite impossible, for they have been more than a month in the cupboard.' 'The very reason,' I reply, 'that they must be *humide.*' But by *humide* she thinks I mean wet, and laughs at the idea of rain getting into a cupboard. A warming-pan is unwillingly produced, but nothing can render them what I call dry. Indeed I am firmly of opinion, as I have said before, that French and Italian sheets *cannot* be dried. Then arrives the horrid process of undressing and conveying me to the bed, which generally, unlike the little narrow Parisian specimens, consists of an enormous family concern, seven feet high, twelve broad, but, to make amends, not more than five feet in length. After sundry efforts, I am at last shot on to it like a sack of potatoes, and in what-

ever attitude I happen to fall, so must I lie, for I cannot turn myself, and no one can help me. I am a complete '*noli me tangere*;' like Mrs. Quickly, 'no man knows where to take me.' In this desolate waste I am doomed to lie in state till morning, between hard stiff sheets which refuse to be tucked up, and which no effort can gather around me, the wind whistling down on each side of me till I almost feel my shirt flap about me. The morning at length arrives, and with it the martyrdom of getting up and being dressed. I am always worse after sleeping long in one position, and, bad as the putting me to bed is, the getting me up in the morning is ten times worse, for 'all the king's horses and all the king's men cannot get Humpty-dumpty up again.' Amidst 'ahs!' and 'ohs!' they get me to the edge of the precipice, and commence the work of loading me with flannel waistcoats and jackets without number, my toilette being similar to that of the Gravedigger in 'Hamlet.' The desperate leap is then made, and I am placed before a table on which is a cup of cold black coffee, soft bread, hard butter, and a blue egg; and then they carry me downstairs on a couple of iron hands clasped together like the emblem of friendship, by way of a chair, which is exactly like riding on a pair of English nut-crackers. In this way they convey me into the yard, and so cram, poke, and pummel me into the carriage again. The price of the whole evening and morning's entertainments is seldom more than twenty-

six or twenty-seven francs—cheap as dirt. After going through these evolutions several times, I could bear it no longer, and so determined to try if I could not travel all night. I found I could perfectly well, and by far preferred it. The bed which I told you the carriage contained, and from which I expected great things, turned out quite useless, from the nature of my complaint, for, in order to make it up, Nanini must go outside, and then, into whatever painful position a rut might throw me, so I must remain in my helpless state till the horses are changed. I did excellently well without it, for the carriage is such a treasure that I am better seated in it than in any other place, with Nanini to light my pipe and arrange my pillows. There I instal myself, and indeed can hardly believe myself in the state I am, for, as long as I remain quiet, I suffer no pain. I command myself about like a piece of mechanism, of which I am chief engineer and inspector-general, and Nanini the practical mechanist. 'Nanini, put down those legs, lift up that head, cover that knee, blow that nose,' as if they did not belong to me. I treat them more as if they belonged to a dear friend than as my own, and while I feel pity and sympathy for the pain in which they are, I congratulate myself that *I* do not suffer. I look upon them as sick children confided to my care, and long for my arrival home to get rid of the responsibility. In short, I shall bring you a carriage full of useless legs and arms, which I shall consign to

your tender care and leave entirely at your disposal. I have tried every means in my power to cure them; indeed, I have treated them as if they were my own, and I shall now place them in your hands and hope that you may have better success. At any rate, I shift the burden from my shoulders, and wash my hands of the business.

"I must remain here a day or two to gather a little force for the remainder of the journey, for, as you may suppose, I am somewhat fatigued. I shall write when I start, that you may be ready for me, have a large tureen of pea-soup and a round of boiled beef 'all hot—all hot,' and an easy-chair by the fire.

"Let me prepare you beforehand for one or two things which you must endeavour to familiarise yourself with. First of all, my calves have vanished; this is of no immediate importance, as they are more objects of pleasing ornament than absolute utility. Next, my hair has nearly all fallen off, and what little remains comes away when I sneeze. This, however, is of small consequence, as my elegant embroidered smoking-cap is in fact much more becoming. But above all you must reconcile yourself to the idea of seeing me on crutches, for they are revolting-looking things! but when you remember that to them alone I owe the power of performing the journey, I hope you will treat them with all the respect and gratitude they deserve. All the rest of me I believe is, in appearance at least, much the same

as always, and I trust the sight and air of my blessed home and the presence of my beloved parents will soon reinstate me altogether. My heart beats high at finding myself so near the happy hour of meeting, and I feel that, once home, all my pains and sorrows will end. With fervent love to my dearest father,

"Ever your most affectionate Son,

"C. J. M."

For fifteen days and nights this martyrdom lasted, and when, at last, Mathews was deposited "just alive," at the door of Ivy Cottage, he had to be carried into the house in the arms of the faithful Nanini.

CHAPTER II.

THE DISTRICT SURVEYOR, 1831-1835.

THE effect of this illness was to reduce Mathews to a state of prostration for many months; and, even after he was able to leave his bed, and to move about, it was only with the help of crutches. But youth and a good constitution prevailed, and in the course of the next year his recovery was complete.

On his partial restoration to health, the first plan that was suggested for the employment of his time was that he should take the place of his father in the management of the Adelphi Theatre, leaving the stage arrangements entirely to Yates, who was the elder Mathews's partner, and himself undertaking the control of the business departments. The following letter will show that the matter was well thought out, and that Mathews had already a good deal of the managerial instinct about him. His time, however, had not yet come, and for some reason the proposed arrangement fell through.

"Kentish Town, Oct. 7th, 1831.

"MY DEAR SIR,

"In compliance with your wish that the proposition made by me to Mr. Yates in my father's name should be clearly defined in writing, I shall endeavour once more to commit to paper the points in question, but at the same time conceive that my personal explanation with Mr. Yates would still be the most satisfactory mode of conveying the spirit of the proposal.

"It is wished, then, that the stage department be conducted solely by Mr. Yates.

"That the expenditure of the theatre be under the control of Mr. C. J. Mathews.

"This is the general proposition, which Mr. Yates declared himself inclined to accept; but as my idea of the extent to which my interference was required did not altogether agree with his, I shall now state on what points I imagine I should be consulted, supposing the expenditure of the theatre to be placed under my direction.

"1st. I consider that no actor, artist, or other person should be engaged in the theatre at a salary exceeding £1 10s. a week without the knowledge and consent of Mr. Yates and Mr. C. J. M. jointly, nor discharged without mutual consent.

"2nd. That no piece shall be received for performance, for which a sum of money is to be advanced, nor

any contract entered into with any author without mutual consent.

"3rd. The expense it may be deemed advisable to incur in producing any piece for dresses, scenes, &c., to be considered and decided upon by both.

"4th. The purchase of every article required for the use of the theatre, the time and mode of payment of tradesmen, performers, and generally the whole expenditure, should be considered as under the control of Mr. C. J. Mathews.

"These are the points which I conceive would belong to my department, and which *do* require the attention of somebody, for the security of Mr. Yates as well as my father.

"I am sorry to have intruded so long upon your patience, but my father was anxious that you as a mutual friend should be made acquainted with the *spirit* in which his proposal was made."

Shortly after this, the Mathews family suffered a severe loss by the death of Nanini, who had so faithfully served Charles through his illness, and by his amiability and devotion had endeared himself to all at Ivy Cottage. Mrs. Mathews, in her life of her husband, speaks of Nanini in the highest terms. "To those who saw Nanini," she says, in alluding to his death, "I need not describe his excellent qualities—his talents, his graceful manner to all, and especial devotion to our family. He

was beloved by everybody in proportion as they knew him, and he was made known to everybody: my husband was extremely attached to him. Although his origin was of the humblest, he was in effect a gentleman. He had the most perfect tact, with a most extraordinary capacity, possessing in himself much talent and humour, with a most remarkable perception of it in others. He scarcely knew a sentence of English, yet understood everybody's meaning. He was beloved by the servants, and such was his mildness that he never excited envy or anger from those who were not equally taken notice of." Mrs. Mathews's descriptions of persons who had gained the affection or esteem of herself or her husband are apt to be of a somewhat enthusiastic nature, and it is probable that this portrait is a little highly coloured; but the letter which follows, and which was written by Mathews to his mother on the receipt of the news of Nanini's death, amply proves that there was a real affection between the servant and his young master.

"Monday Night.

"The shock I have just received, my dearest mother, is almost more than I am able to bear. That I should be away from the poor fellow in his last moments is heart-breaking. I scarcely know what to do. I had taken my place by the night mail when Power arrived with the dreadful intelligence. Mrs. D'Egville won't hear of my starting, and has at last prevailed upon me to

write. My tears almost prevent my seeing what I am about. The suddenness has overwhelmed me. I had written a long letter for to-day's post when David arrived. I had not the most remote idea of such an event, or I should have flown up long ago. It was hardly right to let me remain so long in ignorance; but of course you did all that you thought right upon the sad occasion. I shall never forgive myself for not having been near him. Mrs. D'Egville insists upon my remaining here till I have one line from you to advise me. My intention was to start immediately, that I might once more see the faithful fellow; but I could not consent to return here without following him to his grave. I hardly know what to determine. The sight of him, perhaps, might be more than I could bear, but nothing shall prevent my attending his funeral. I could never be happy without paying him that last mark of affection. I have consented to stay till Monday morning, when I shall expect one line from you to advise me and tell me what you wish. I feel for your situation most acutely, and am most anxious to join you and relieve you from part of your painful charge. I am most thankful that my father's return was postponed, that he is spared so dreadful a blow on his arrival. I am too agitated to write all I wish, but my desire to attend his funeral is most anxious, and I would abandon the idea of seeing him, which would be of less importance to my feelings, if I could but be allowed the sad task of

following him to his grave. I have nothing more to say till I receive one line from you by to-morrow's post or coach. I will do whatever you wish. I am desirous beyond everything of seeing him, but I can hardly gather courage. I am in a most agonising state, I assure you, but they will not hear of my starting to-night. I wait then for your letter. My dearest mother,

"Your affectionate Son,

"C. J. M."

Many subsequent allusions to Nanini occur in Mathews's letters, and the memory of the faithful Italian was long and gratefully cherished.

During the next few years Mathews led a somewhat desultory life. Architecture, painting, writing for the stage,* travelling, and amateur acting all in turn occupied

* One of the pieces which were written about this time led to the introduction of Mathews as an author to Madame Vestris, and, read in the light of subsequent events, the following letters are not without interest:

"33, Brompton Square, Dec. 9th, 1831.

"DEAR CHARLES,

"I gave 'Pyramus and Thisbe' to Madame Vestris, as I promised you, but heard nothing further about it, till last night, very unexpectedly, they informed me it is their intention to put it in hand immediately; but previously they wished to communicate with the author, and asked his name and address. This was a poser—as I could give neither without compromising your incognito. I told them however I would direct a letter to the Post Office, Brighton,

his time and attention; but there can be no doubt that, very soon after his return from Italy, the slow progress he was making towards a position was gradually drawing him more and more from the profession he had at first so enthusiastically embraced.

The autumn of 1833 was passed in a delightful visit to the Highland home of the Duke and Duchess of Bedford at the Doune of Rothiemurchus, and the wilder and more primitive Glenfishie. Here Mathews succeeded in making himself as useful and popular as at Naples and at Florence, with the Blessingtons and the

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upon the chance of its reaching you. You had better write without delay to Madame, 13, Craven Buildings, as doubtless they wish to arrange the terms before they put the piece into rehearsal.

"Give our love to your mother. Mrs. Liston wrote to her some time back, not knowing she was gone to Brighton. How do you get on?

"Yours truly,

"J. LISTON."

"Olympic Theatre, Monday, 12th Dec., 1831.

"SIR,

"I received your letter this morning, and have read your piece, 'Pyramus and Thisbe,' which I approve of much, as well as Mr. Liston, who has also read it.

"My usual terms for a one-act piece are twenty-five pounds, and if this meets your views I shall be glad to hear from you immediately, as I shall put it into hand without loss of time.

"Your request as to the *nom de guerre* shall be most faithfully attended to.

"I am, Sir,

"Your very obedient Servant,

"E. VESTRIS."

Normanbys. How lively a time it was will be gathered from the following letters, which have been selected from a voluminous correspondence.

"The Doune, Sept. 21, 1833.

"MY DEAREST MOTHER,

"The letter you last week received from hence was written by the Duchess, nor do I know what it contained. There is no moment which can be found for long letter-writing. I have been living for the last three or four days in a tent, and am in a state of excitement. I cannot sit down. To-morrow is Sunday, and I will try and write more coherently. I have only received one sheet from you since I started, so that you cannot much complain. Everything here is wild; the country is wild, the animals are wild, the weather is wild; the two young ladies who are here are wild as March hares; and I verily believe if I stay another week here I shall be wild myself. Which you will the more easily believe, as you, who know me better than anybody in the world, never gave me credit for much sense.

"'The young ladies are not wild. So far from it, that's quite the reverse. The gentlemen *horrid bores*; do nothing but boast of their shooting, throwing large stones, and having savage dogs; and I must say I shall not be sorry to get rid of their company.'

"The above is written by one of the prettiest girls in the world, in red stockings, a short bedgown, grey

petticoat, and a snood, by which you will see that I am well and in good spirits, and am

"Your most affectionate Son,

"C. J. MATHEWS.

"Best love to Pa."

"Glenfishie, Sept. 25th, 1833.

"MY DEAREST MOTHER,

"I have just received your letter of the 20th, and not before I wished it, for I began to wonder why you did not write. It was, however, satisfactory in everything except the account of my father's illness. I cannot make out whether the second doctor pronounced it to be gout also. I can hardly believe it possible. His country trips are certainly most unfortunate. The letter which caused you so much speculation I believe I told you before was written by the Duchess.* I had

* The letter here alluded to was one of the many practical jokes which were played during this trip, and ran as follows:

"MY DEAREST MOTHER,

"Nothing can be more disagreeable than my *séjour* here. Lady Georgiana hates music, therefore my talents are not appreciated. Miss Balfour thinks she sings well; quite a mistake. Her grace is the very personification of 'My Wife's Mother.' If she were on the boards she would have no trouble in learning her part. I am prevented by obstacles being always put in my way from sketching, the only thing that could compensate for all the various torments I have to endure. Imagine the cruelty of making me sleep in a tempestuous night under a stone! I am threatened with being banished into a tent. Oh for the joys of home, sweet home! And, my dearest mother, God bless you. "Your affectionate and attached

"CHARLES.

"Saturday Morning."

refused to join some party on the plea of having to write, when she proposed that I should leave her to do it for me. It was sealed and sent when I returned, and I haven't the slightest notion of what it contained.

"A day or two after our return from the trip to Loch Avon, which I described you in my last letter, preparations were made for flitting from the Doune, to take up our residence in a romantic glen about fifteen miles off, where the Duchess loves to dwell and lay out her pin money. Orders were given that all *grande toilette* should be suspended until further notice, and that those who were not prepared to rough it should remain behind. Leaving the ladies to get there their own way, we gentlemen at break of day (that is between eight and nine) set off on our shaggy ponies with the intention of shooting our way over the mountain tops to the glen. The day was beautiful, and the road everything that could be desired. Perhaps I ought here to explain that whenever I mention roads I mean those which we make ourselves, for even a sheep path is almost a rarity over these wild mountains. After a most fatiguing ascent, we reached the ptarmigan hills, where the party dispersed in various directions in quest of game. Having ascertained the direction of the glen I left them and proceeded alone across the mountains, with the day before me to enjoy the magnificent views which presented themselves on all sides. After a most delightful walk I entered the narrow pass leading to the glen,

through the centre of which foamed and tumbled the river Fishie, forming in its course an endless variety of waterfalls. Towards evening, having waded four or five times up to my middle through the stream, an amusement of such frequent occurrence here as hardly to be worth mentioning, I entered that part of the pass which is called *par excellence* 'the' glen. There I found the ladies. The Duchess, Lady Rachel, and the maids had arrived a little before me in their tilt-cart; Miss Balfour and Lady Georgiana having, under the escort of a guide, walked all the way from the Doune. I was immediately conducted to view the habitation, and certainly never saw anything half so original in conception or so perfect in execution as the whole thing. The appearance was that of a small Indian settlement, consisting of one low building containing three or four bedrooms and the kitchen, &c., and two smaller ones of one room each, the one being dining-room, parlour, drawing-room, and hall, and the other containing two beds for ladies. The rest of the settlement was composed of tents, various in size and in use. The buildings themselves looked like the poorest peasants' cottages. The walls made of turf and overgrown with foxglove, and the roof of untrimmed spars of birch. The apartments within corresponded perfectly with their exterior. Everything of rough unpeeled birch, except the uncovered turf walls. The fires of peat and clear-burning fir blazed away upon the ground, in short, everything bespeaking the habitation

of some tasteful wood-cutter. The drawing-room was of tolerable length and height, but the bedrooms only just large enough to turn round in. The beds of the ladies resembled small presses or chests of drawers, with mattresses stuffed with heather and pillows of the same let into them like the hammocks of a vessel. The gentlemen's apartments were in tents, each containing two small heather couches, side by side on tressels, one small table and a wash-hand-stand and foot-bath, but no chairs, curtains, nor looking-glass. The carpet was of turf, upon which our wardrobes were arranged, protected by occasional pieces of wood in case of promiscuous or superfluous damp. Can you conceive all this, or do you think me inventing? Here we have been now above a week, living on venison, grouse, hares, partridges, black-cock, ptarmigan, plovers, salmon, char, pike, trout, beef, mutton, pork, &c., &c., all killed by ourselves and nearly on the spot; at any rate all (even red deer and ptarmigan) within a mile of the house. The ladies have only the dress of the country shape and material. Bedgown of some light material, generally striped; a blue cloth or grey stuff petticoat, very short; scarlet, grey, and blue stockings, aprons and mittens, and snoods of red or blue through their hair, and coloured handkerchiefs protect their heads from rain and wind; but bonnets and caps are unknown. The gentlemen wear the kilts, and, in short, everything is picturesque in the extreme. It is without any exception the most delightful sort of life I

have ever seen or experienced. Amusements of every sort are constantly going on. The guitar is in great request, and a small piano of two octaves, made on purpose for travelling, is constantly going. Lord Ossulston and Miss Balfour both sing beautifully, and we get up songs, duets, and trios without end. A more charming spot for midnight serenading cannot be imagined. The weather has been very rough and stormy since our sojourn in the glen, and sketching and painting have been out of the question. Indeed, as you may easily imagine, I have done but little in that way, but I have filled my mind with novelties which I hope will be of service. The party is much too full of fun to allow anything like study to go on, and even were that not the case, painting were impossible in our present dwelling.



CHARLES J. MATHEWS IN THE KILT.
From a pen-and-ink sketch by himself.

"On the other side of the Fishie, about a quarter of a mile from us, is another, but far inferior dwelling, formerly occupied by the Duchess, and built by her, but now the residence of Captain Ross, with whom is

Mr. Ellis and his son. You remember Ellis well, and I think with unfavourable impression, but I can assure you that we much wronged him, for he is a most kind, good-natured, agreeable person. He and his son have taken the shooting ground which joins that of Rothiemurchus in conjunction with Ross, and are capital neighbours. Our party went over on Monday to dine with them. One of our tents was sent across to form the banqueting hall, and each man took his knife and fork with him. The day turned out tremendous. Torrents of rain and tempests of wind succeeded each other, till we began to fear that the river would be too much swollen to allow us to attempt the fords, three of which were to be passed. At seven o'clock, however, in the midst of a hurricane, we set off. The tilt-cart held six, and the rest were accommodated on ponies. The passing through the rocky bed of the river would, I think, have suited you perfectly. The cart, not particularly easy in itself, falling from stone to stone, and threatening an upset any moment; the water tearing down with the greatest rapidity, and filling the bottom of the cart; and the wind, with the most frightful gusts, positively rocking it to and fro. On the other side we were met by the piper, who walked before us to the house, and half-a-dozen gillies walked in procession on each side of the cart, the horsemen following. On reaching the Wooden House, as it is called, anticipating rather uneasy quarters in the tent,

we were most agreeably surprised by finding that the idea had been abandoned, and that Ellis's bedroom had been cleared out, beds removed, and guns unshipped, to form a dining-room. A tremendous fire of wood and peat blazed upon the hearth, and a long well-secured table stood in the middle of the room, well covered with candles of wax stuck in turnip candlesticks of the most elegant workmanship; on the timbers of the roof other similar candlesticks were fixed, so that the illumination was splendid. The banquet was profuse and the dressing exquisite. Venison in every shape and disguise; wild game and fish of every sort and description; ending with cranberry and blaeberry tarts, and all sorts of clotted cream, custards, apple-puddings, and turnip-pies. Lots of champagne, claret, moselle, ices, &c., were disposed of, not to allude to the bottled porter, ale, soda-water, and all those sort of luxuries, which abounded. The feast was exceedingly gay, the piper playing all the time outside, and an enormous bonfire of birch and fir-trees kept constantly alive, in spite of the most tremendous unceasing hurricane which raged without. After the ladies retired, mulled claret and whiskey toddy were introduced; and coffee and tea, with songs and choruses, welcomed their return. All these things having been duly honoured, gillies were despatched to see in what state the river was, as it was strongly suspected that it might have increased so as to prevent our return. The report, however, justified an attempt

—though not a thing to be done without great hazard, in consequence of the darkness of the night, the rapidity of the torrent, and the hurricane which raged—and preparations were made for the undertaking. The tilt-cart was brought out, and the ladies and boys were packed within it; the gentlemen mounted their ponies, and our hosts ordered out their horses to escort the party. The rain descended in torrents, notwithstanding which the bonfire still burnt brightly, and illuminated an immense space around it, with the drenched Highlanders plainly discernible in the midst of the glare. All being in order, the cavalcade set out, preceded by a dozen gillies bearing immense blazing firebrands of fir branches, next the pipes, playing lustily before the tilt-cart, which rocked about through the mud and moss most alarmingly, followed by the horsemen and a second detachment of blazing branches. The effect was very fine indeed; and the commanding figure of Ross—a sort of O. Smith man—in his Scotch bonnet, large smuggler's jacket, and bare legs and tartan hose, mounted on a large black charger, who rode about twenty yards in front of the whole party, completed the procession. In spite of all difficulties we reached our own quarters in safety, and, within our tents that night, many were the glasses of whiskey toddy, and pipes and cigars, which were consumed by the survivors. This romantic day had nearly ended fatally, for, in the middle of the night, young Ellis discovered his bed to be on fire, which was rapidly

gaining on the curtains and timber roof. He sprang out and called up the rest, who rushed to his assistance, when the keeper announced that the powder-magazine was over the burning bed, and instantly rushed to the spot. They saw him reach the cupboard and secure the three cases of powder which it contained. As he returned with them one fell among the burning boards and heather, which he pursued and secured, at the hazard of his life, from the flames. Our tent was anything but lulling in the course of the night, but a fine sunshiny morning put to flight the terrors of the past night.

"What do you think of ladies of fashion going through, for their pleasure and amusement, such real hardships as I have described to you? I think it the most surprising thing I ever met with. Nothing daunts them, and no fatigue is too much for them.

"The night after the dinner-party we gave a ball, and all the lads and lasses in the neighbourhood (that is about a dozen in all, being the population of ten or twelve miles round) were invited. Two fiddlers and a piper worked away from eight in the evening till six in the morning, when the delicate young ladies, who had walked ten miles to the ball in the rain, and waded through three fords in their way, set out again, after dancing all night, to walk back—through the three fords—ten miles to their work. There are many people would call this making a labour of a pleasure, but they

find pleasure in the labour. The quantity of whiskey toddy drank upon the occasion you may suppose was not small, but there was no one, I understand, *very* fou. The Duchess, notwithstanding a slight failing—from a previous accident—in her knee, danced as well as any one of the party, and in the reels decidedly beat all. The young ladies are sylphs. As to myself, I must own I am amazed. The manner in which I walk over the hills, ford the rivers, scale the rocks, and dance reels is past belief. I feel just as strong, and able to support fatigue, as I ever was in my life, and the more I take the stronger I am. So much for that. Lord Russell has joined us—the Duke of Bedford as is to be—a very good sort of quiet man. Post-time is come, and so I must leave off, hardly knowing what I have said; but you must make allowance for writing on a dark blowing day, in a small room, with sixteen people in it, all talking at the same time.

"Give my best love to my dear father, whose gout I hope is really rheumatics, and which you didn't know how to spell.

"Believe me,

"Ever your affectionate Son,

"C. J. MATHEWS."

From the Doune, Mathews and Edwin Landseer, between whom had been established a friendship that was to be only closed by death, went to Chillingham

Castle and Woburn Abbey, and it was not without reluctance that a return was made to London.*

But the situation had to be faced. It was time that a real professional start should be made. The elder Mathews's circumstances were going from bad to worse. Unfortunate speculations had crippled his means; ill-health made the future look more than doubtful. Charles had to earn a living by something more profitable than the writing of farces, at a time when such work was miserably paid, or by an amateur's flirtations with the arts.

"'Am I an architect now?' I asked," Mathews says, describing this period of his life. "'You are,' I was answered. 'Very well then,' I rejoined. 'Exactly,' was the reply; and that was about all the prospect that presented itself. How was I to start? Should I take a stall at Charing Cross, with my name on a board, and ply for custom? or must I sit at home and wait? I did not like either plan. Some to whom I applied laughed openly in my face. 'Oh, pooh! you'll never settle

* Mathews and Landseer appear to have enjoyed themselves considerably about this time. A letter from the latter to "Dear Mat" of August 1, 1833—just before the Doune visit—says: "Could you send your fiddle to No. 6, Belgrave Square, during to-morrow? as the Duchess gives us a supper after the play, when we shall most likely have a lark. This is all *my* arrangement, and I hope you will not send your guitar to sup without the poor player, as I wish my good friends to become better acquainted with you, as they will most likely be bored by us for a month in the Highlands."

down to be an architect, you're too fond of acting. Why don't you go on the stage?' Others said, 'write a farce;' others, 'paint a picture;' but none told me how to commence."

The dilemma was serious. At last, Samuel Angell, with whom Mathews had formerly visited Pæstum and Pompeii, taking a business-like view of the position, gave what was, under the circumstances, the best possible advice. This was that Mathews should take some step that would show his friends that he was at last in downright earnest, and meant to work at his profession as a serious matter, and not as a pastime. It was proposed and ultimately decided, that an endeavour should be made to obtain a district surveyorship, and that, if the office were fortunately secured, its work should be thoroughly and conscientiously done. The suggestion was not adopted without some repugnance, as will be gathered from Mathews's own account of what followed.

"'A district surveyorship!' I exclaimed. 'What's that? Measuring chimney pots and cleaning out gully holes? What has an architect to do with that?' 'Everything,' said he. 'You must study the Act of Parliament, superintend the erection of all the dwellings in the district, regulate all the party walls and flues, and show yourself master of the practical part of the science as well as the ornamental. Bow and Bethnal Green are both vacant. Start at once.' Bow and Bethnal Green!

Here was a bathos! From Rome and Venice to Bow and Bethnal Green. However, it was to be done, and at it I went.

"A local habitation and a name was the first thing needed, and in a moment I had both. I took an empty room in Furnival's Inn; had my name painted on the door, and a slit cut in it for letters; wafered a paper on the outside with 'back in five minutes' written on it; and boldly put my advertisement in *The Times*, offering myself as a candidate for the vacant situation of District Surveyor for Bow and Bethnal Green, with my address as architect, of 'Furnival's Inn—back in five minutes.'

"Having obtained a list of the Middlesex magistrates, on whom the appointment depended, I opened an overwhelming fire of letters and applications. Every friend I had in the world was pressed into the service, and assisted in the siege. The moment I received a refusal I became the more importunate, and poured in letter after letter till I obtained a vote. I soon found it was a question of calculation and interest. Nothing was to be granted without hope of return. In one instance, after firing about twenty applications at an influential city knight, and getting no answer to any of them, I happened to send one from Sir Francis Freeling, then at the head of the Post Office, and able to grant important favours in return. An instant reply, acceding to his request, was received, and answers were then vouchsafed

to all the previous applicants, granting the request of each separately, and thus making twenty grateful hearts to be made useful when required.

'I was successful, and found myself staggering under the honour of being publicly recognised as Surveyor of Bow. Down I went on the top of the omnibus, with the Building Act in my hand, to take possession of my new kingdom. A charming mission it turned out; and for three years—on the top of the same omnibus, with the same Building Act in my hand, and which I never succeeded in understanding to the last—I journeyed to perform the pleasing duties that devolved upon me. The only touch of joy I had was on the discovery of a locality rejoicing in the name of Cutthroat Lane, and in no other place could I make up my mind to fix my office. 'District Surveyor, Cutthroat Lane,' was something to have on one's card, and gave a spice of romance to the affair. The emolument arising from the appointment was startling, and about forty pounds per annum compensated me for my agreeable labours—that is, would have done so had I received it, but there was the difficulty. It consisted of fees—fees to be collected by myself in person, and a pretty time I had of it. At one house I knocked humbly, after considerable hesitation. The door was opened cautiously, with the chain up, and a stout suspicious-looking dame, in a pair of nankeen stays, asked me if I came 'arter the taxes or summut?' 'No, madam,' I said deferentially; 'I am the district

surveyor, from Cutthroat Lane, and I have called for——' 'Oh bother!' said the lady; 'summons me, if you like. I'm not going to be humbugged by you.' Another defaulter kept an oilcloth warehouse in Whitechapel. I was some time before I could muster up courage to enter, as there were several customers assembled. However, I ventured it, and was met by an appeal that was irresistible. 'What!' said the master of the establishment, 'you, a gentleman, come to a poor man like me, and ask for such a paltry sum as that? You ought to be ashamed of yourself!' Turning with indignation to his customers—'What do you think of this? Here's a gentleman who——' I did not stop to hear the rest, but made my exit at once. I was not curious to hear the opinions of his friends, and thought myself lucky to escape being tossed in a blanket. Shade of Vitruvius! was this architecture?"

This uncongenial life was, however, not to be of long duration. The final collapse of the elder Mathews's unfortunate speculations at last brought things to a crisis. Actions to the amount of many thousands of pounds were brought against him. He was obliged to part with the cottage at Highgate, and to take refuge in a house in Great Russell Street, Bloomsbury. The theatrical gallery, the collection of which had cost so much time and money, went with the general wreck—fortunately it found a home in the Garrick Club—and

as a last resource another visit to America was determined on.

During the absence of his father and mother, Mathews appears to have drifted back to his art studies, although he continued to hold his surveyorship, and in 1835 he exhibited a picture at the Royal Academy.* "At the same time," he notes, "the pleasures of society were not neglected, and the dramatic links, which fate seemed to have attached to me, were supplied by the kind invitation of the Duke and Duchess of Bedford to Woburn Abbey, where private theatricals became once more the order of the day. Here I figured as a star from the Teatro San Clementi at Florence, and played several of my old parts, with the addition of many new ones, and the success I met with as an actor afforded me a sort of consolation for my want of employment as an architect."

After one of these pleasant visits to Woburn Abbey, in February, 1834, Mrs. Mathews, writing to her husband at York, says: "Charlie returned from Woburn Abbey last night. . . . I was liberal enough to spare

* Of this picture, Sir Edwin Landseer, writing to "Dear Matty," says: "Your picture is not in a good room, but is well seen. Callcott says he could do no more. There is much in it to be praised. I wish I had seen it before you sent it." In 1860, a picture of Mathews's, called "Arden Hall," and priced at sixty guineas, was exhibited at the Royal Manchester Institution.

him at ten o'clock to go to Lady Macdonald's,* a most flatteringly friendly note having arrived last week here from the beautiful Miss Julia Macdonald, praying him to come early and stay late. . . . If he had not the sense and right feeling of six young men in his head and heart, the extraordinary attentions he receives would turn both. His visit to Woburn Abbey has teemed with every delight, and he comes home and settles himself immediately down to home and his pursuits with avidity even, all cheerfulness and happiness."

But notwithstanding Mathews's outward cheerfulness, and the high spirits that were natural to him, restlessness and dissatisfaction with himself and his position are abundantly shown in many little touches in the correspondence of this period—touches so slight as to be nothing in themselves, but which are decisive in their cumulative effect.

One document, apparently the beginning of one of those diaries which were always being begun and never finished, may be quoted here. It affords a curious indication of the state of mind which resulted from one of those private "stock-takings" of self, which are not uncommon with men even as outwardly cheerful and happy as Mathews was described to be.

* Lady Macdonald was the wife of Lord Macdonald, formerly known as General Bosville.

"January 1st, 1835.

"When I reflect upon the number of things I had reckoned upon mastering before the age of thirty, and the number of those things, some knowledge of which I once possessed but have suffered to escape me from mere neglect, I naturally ask myself, how this has happened.

"I cannot charge myself with idleness, for though the subjects to which I have devoted my time may perhaps have been unworthily chosen, at least I have not been idle, according to the received definition of that word—I mean I have been incessantly occupied, nor ever yet found a day long enough for me.

"If then idleness has not occasioned the mischief, what has? My conscience tells me I must trace it all to my besetting sin, procrastination.

"Shall I never kill this hydra? The destruction of one head will not destroy the monster. I feel there is but one way to accomplish it—by method.

"Let me lop off one head at once by arranging this method without procrastinating.

"I wish to do too many things. I ought never to have dipped into such a variety of subjects, but having dipped, I must try to dive, and if I find after a fair trial that it be impossible to go deep into all, why I must be content to skate over the surface of literature in the best way I can, preferring, with my eyes open, this agreeable

error to the less palatable truth, that it is better to stick to one thing.

SCHEME FOR THE DIVISION OF TIME.

Thursday.	The recovery of Greek.	On all these days are to be kept up the acquirements of Painting and Music. One letter to be written each day. One call to be made each day.
Friday.	The recovery of Latin.	
Saturday.	Teach myself German.	
Sunday.	Religion.	
Monday.	Teach myself Spanish.	
Tuesday.	Italian Dialects.	

N.B.—This day to be devoted especially to research upon the one literary subject which happens to be the engrossing topic *par excellence* of my study.

Wednesday. Miscellaneous reading.

Each day will be expected to contribute its portion towards the formation of a collection under the head of

Ana.

A collection of actions, portraits, observations, and anecdotes, extracts from letters and daily conversations, wherein my friends and myself are to be characterized under feigned names.

List of books. Works published which may be desirable.

"The determination to adhere strictly to such a system of method in all things, at the 'certain age' of thirty, smacks, I own, fearfully of the old bachelor, but, as such, I am afraid, is my lot upon earth (seeing no chance of ever being able to afford a wife), why I must e'en be content to submit to the odious appellation, and make up my mind to seek for happiness from a mistress —Knowledge."

The American expedition was not a success, either from the point of view of health or of profit, and the elder Mathews returned home a broken man. The end followed speedily. He died on the 28th of June, 1835, without having been able in any way to retrieve his position, and the event and its consequences had the immediate effect of making a complete revolution in his son's life.

It became clear that the stage, towards which he had been so long drifting, was to be his destination. Before, however, taking the final resolution to become an actor, he tried management, and undertook that direction of the Adelphi which had been suggested four years before. The letters which follow will show that the gravity of this undertaking and the serious nature of his responsibilities were not lost upon him.

"102, Great Russell Street, July 18th, 1835.

"DEAR SIR,

"Mr. Broderip has informed me that Mr. Clarke intimated to him your expectation of hearing from me respecting the Adelphi. I am aware that no time should be lost in making the necessary preparations for the opening of the theatre on the 29th of September. I am anxious to do everything in my power to benefit the property, either by devoting my whole time to the management, or by the adoption of any measures which may be considered most advantageous. No property of

this nature can be conducted with advantage unless constantly superintended by the proprietors, whose interest it always must be to curtail unnecessary expenses, and to conciliate as much as possible all persons connected with the establishment; and as I am by no means a novice amongst theatrical people, I feel that with proper exertions on my part these objects can be attained; at all events, I am resolved to undertake the management jointly with you; or if your other avocations will prevent you from devoting your time to the concern, I am perfectly willing to manage the theatre myself.

"Dear Sir,

"Yours truly,

"C. J. MATHEWS.

"F. H. Yates, Esq."

"Great Russell Street, July 22nd, 1835.

"DEAR SIR,

"I have received your letter of this day's date, and I regret that any delay should occur in the arrangements of the theatre at a period when you must be well aware no time should be lost. I have not stated anything respecting a change of the management for the last ten years, for I am perfectly ignorant of what the management was previous to my father's purchase of Mr. Terry's share. I know that the understanding between my father and yourself was, that you should

manage and act at the theatre in the winter season, and that my father should give an entertainment in the summer; but the change of circumstances precludes the possibility of a continuance of that plan, for my father is no more, and you have embarked in an extensive concern, which must necessarily prevent your exclusive attention to the Adelphi Theatre; and, indeed, you have openly expressed your intention and desire to part with your interest in it if a purchaser could be found.

"Whether I may or may not be successful as a manager, it is at least my duty, as well as my interest, to endeavour to turn to the most profitable account a property in which my mother and myself are so greatly concerned; and by abandoning my profession, and solely attending to the theatre, I feel that our interests will be better consulted by my personal management than by its delegation to a stranger. My father's name, even through me, will add weight and respectability to a theatre; and his numerous friends are anxious to assist and to patronise any position which I may occupy with the public. I certainly shall study economy as much as possible, for the treasury is the only test of such an establishment.

"With respect to the mutual claims which you and my father had on each other, I can only observe that no one can be more desirous than myself of avoiding litigation, and that it certainly will not be my fault if any take place. Mr. Gladstone and Mr. Durrant are the

only persons who know all the particulars of the case; and the joint decision of those gentlemen, or indeed of either of them, would satisfy me. If any more formal adjudication is to be sought, I must consult those who are competent to advise me on this part of the subject.

"I am, dear Sir,

"Yours truly,

"C. J. MATHEWS.

"To F. H. Yates, Esq."

Yates's reply will also be interesting in this place.

"52, Brompton Square, July 28, 1835.

"DEAR SIR,

"I have received a copy of a letter of yours to Mr. Gladstone. . . .

"With reference to your last letter to me, allow me to put you right on one point. You seem to think that the Colosseum will take up my attention in the winter, so as to preclude my managing the Adelphi. Pray understand that this is not the case. If I go out of the management, it is solely because you wish to *share* it with me, and I feel a conviction that two managers would be fatal to the property.

"I am enabled to make you the following distinct propositions:

"Without reference to the partnership deed between your lamented father and myself, and without prejudice

to my right to purchase his interest, under the terms of the late partnership deed, I agree to give over to you the exclusive management for one year, at a salary of ten pounds, to be drawn weekly from the treasury. No new engagements to be entered upon for more than one year.

"If you reject these terms, I am equally willing to undertake the task on the same conditions.

"Of course, if you accept the management, my time's my own.

"I am, my dear Sir,

"Yours truly,

"FRED. H. YATES."

Before the matter was finally decided, Mr. Broderip, the solicitor and friend of the family, gave the embryo manager the following excellent advice:

"Lincoln's Inn, July 29, 1835.

"MY DEAR CHARLES,

"By the partnership deed it is perfectly clear that, if the term did not expire in your father's lifetime, it is incumbent on you to offer his share to Mr. Yates. But I should have considered such a proceeding a mere farce after the conversations which have taken place between Mr. Clarke and myself on the subject; for within a few weeks only I offered your father's share to

Mr. Y., through Mr. Clarke, who not only rejected the purchase, but stated that Mr. Y.'s share was for sale, and we might purchase it. His price was, as I was informed, £17,000; your father's the same; and as you now take to the theatre as a matter of necessity—for the protection of a property in which your mother and yourself have so large a stake, and not as one of choice—it would be most desirable if Mr. Yates would give the £17,000, and you should afford every possible facility for his arrangement of the purchase. It was the price paid by your father, and the association of his name and talents to the concern must have added to, instead of decreasing, the value. If, however, the ridiculous formalities of making an offer of the share for £17,000, receiving a counter-offer under that sum, rejecting such counter-offer, and submitting to arbitration are to be enforced, you must abandon all idea of opening the theatre; for this preliminary machinery must either be perfected or waived before you can stir a step. Either take to the property as your own or abandon it to Mr. Yates, and I hope that he may become the purchaser. It cannot be supposed that you are capable of arguing upon the construction of deeds, and indeed it would be better, both for Mr. Yates and yourself, after you have completely understood each other's wishes, that your intentions as to the future should be arranged in writing by Mr. Clarke and myself. Do not now determine to abandon your

present profession, which you can pursue if Mr. Yates becomes the means of relieving you from the burden of this property.

"Yours very truly,

"J. BRODERIP."

Mathews had, however, decided upon the undertaking, in which perhaps he was considerably influenced by the wishes of his mother, as well as by the encouragement of friends, of whom D'Orsay wrote in the following terms of the prospects of the undertaking:

"Londres, 1 Septembre.

"MON CHER CHARLES,

"J'étois trop lié avec votre bon père, et trop ami aussi avec vous, pour faire ce qu'on appele une visite de condolence, ainsi vous m'excuserez pour n'être pas allé m'attrister, plus que je ne l'étois par la perte que nous avons faite. J'étois encore l'autre jour à Goodwood, et je puis avouer, en vertu de ma sincerité, que j'avois le cœur bien ulceré, en étant sur le même spot où, l'année avant, je plaisantoit avec votre cher père. Depuis le moment que j'ai su que vous avez pris l'Adelphi, j'ai décidé avec Lord Worcester que nous ferions tout notre possible pour entraîner la société en votre faveur, a force d'y penser et d'en parler. Reeves part pour l'Amérique; Mme. Honey

est engagée ailleurs; enfin, la plupart des vieilles associations de ce théâtre se retirent. Je viens donc vous conseiller d'entrer en arrangement avec le propriétaire du Queen's Theatre, qui transporteroit sa troupe avec la votre—l'union feroit la force. Le Queen's Theatre a été très *successful* cette saison; encore hier ils avoient £90 de recette—c'est extraordinaire pour la saison. Chesterfield, Worcester, et moi, y avons une loge, et nous avons envie d'en avoir une à l'Adelphi; et hier au soir, en parlant de ce sujet à Bond, il m'a dit qu'il seroit enchanté de réunir sa troupe à la votre, et de fermer par conséquence le Queen's Theatre. Pensez à cela, voyez si vous pouvez y trouver votre avantage, et dites le moi."

Finally, after much preliminary negotiation, the Adelphi Theatre was opened by Messrs. C. J. Mathews and Yates, on September 28th, 1835.

For the opening campaign Mathews wrote a "new romantic melodrama" called "Mandrin," in which Yates and Buckstone appeared, the latter's part being, according to *The Times*, "amusingly played." The house, on the same authority, was "crowded to an overflow," and the prospects of the undertaking for some time looked bright enough. From some cause or other, however—the opening of Covent Garden by Osbaldeston at low prices was generally given as the reason—the expectations of the managers were disappointed. Mathews

retired from his share in the management, to make his appearance on the boards of the Olympic in the new vocation in which he was to have so many strange experiences, and in which he was destined to pass more than forty years.

CHAPTER III.

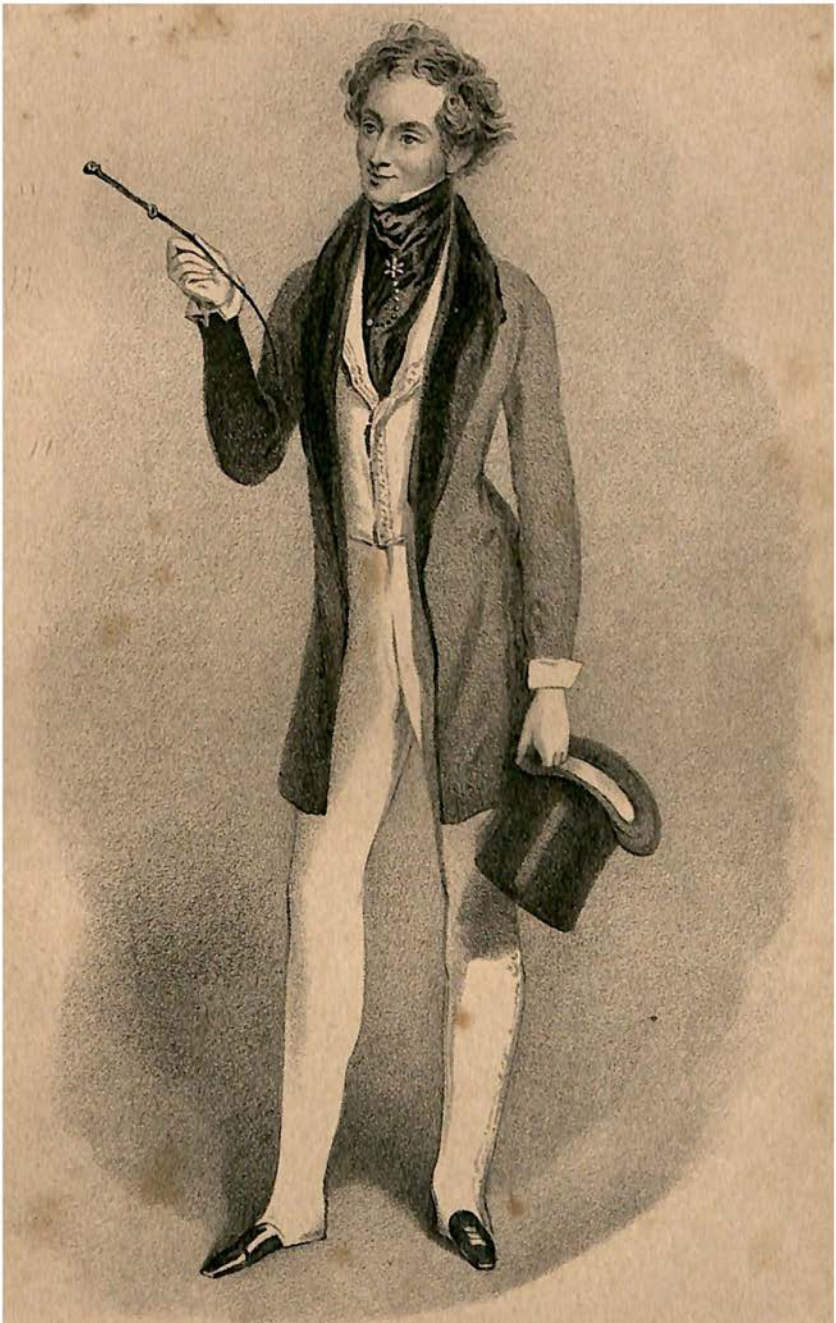
AUTOBIOGRAPHY (*continued*)—DIFFICULTIES, 1835-1858.

I COME now to the second part of my career, and I must confess I feel no small difficulty respecting it. I am aware that it is delicate ground I am entering on, and whether it can be made interesting or not is still to be ascertained. The poetry of my life is over, and I commence the prose; and if I cannot make it amusing, I will at least try and make it instructive, by offering an illustration of the old quotation of "Facilis descensus Averni," and showing how easy are the stages by which a man may descend from the airy empyrean of poetry, music, and painting, to the heavy slough of pounds, shillings, and pence.

The theatre for my *début* as an actor was chosen without a moment's hesitation. I had no passion for what was called the "regular drama." I had no respect for traditional acting, and had no notion of taking a "line of business," as it is called—that is, undertaking for so much per week all the characters in comedy and

tragedy, whether fitting or not, played by Mr. Charles Kemble, or Mr. Jones, or Mr. Elliston, whose every movement was registered in the prompt-book, and from whose "'business," as it is technically termed, no deviation was allowed. The lighter phase of comedy, representing the more natural and less laboured school of modern life, and holding the mirror up to nature without regard to the conventionalities of the theatre, was the aim I had in view. The Olympic was then the only house where this could be achieved, and to the Olympic I at once attached myself. There was introduced for the first time in England that reform in all theatrical matters which has since been adopted in every theatre in the kingdom. Drawing-rooms were fitted up like drawing-rooms, and furnished with care and taste. Two chairs no longer indicated that two persons were to be seated, the two chairs being removed indicating that the two persons were not to be seated. A claret-coloured coat, salmon-coloured trowsers with a broad black stripe, a sky-blue neckcloth with large paste brooch, and a cut-steel eye-glass with a pink ribbon no longer marked the "light comedy gentleman," and the public at once recognised and appreciated the change.

On the 6th of November, 1835, I made my first appearance in a little piece of my own, called the "Humpbacked Lover," and a farce by Leman Rede, called the "Old and Young Stager." The prestige of my father's name, and the advantage of being brought forward by



CHARLES J. MATHEWS as "GEORGE RATTLETON"
in the "HUMPBACKED LOVER"
(about 1836.)

Mr. Liston,* with whom he had so long been associated in the remembrance of the audience, had, doubtless, much to do with the great success I met with, and I had

* "Address, to be spoken by Mr. Liston, on the first appearance of Mr. C. J. Mathews, at the Olympic Theatre, November, 1835."

Oh! let me beg—this night—with you and here,
One moment to be serious and sincere.
Serious and Liston! you will pause and ask;
Mathews and friendship make me drop the mask.
'Twere useless now to dwell on days long past,
Yet with that spirit's humour mine was cast;
And something of your kindly-yielded fame
Came to me blended with his brightening name.
Forgive this recollection, but he leaves
One who would fain, on these your joyous eves,
Try on the buskin which—the word's a spell—
Fitted the father, as we know, so well.
With a right spirit and a crowning name,
He spreads his sail out in the wake of fame.
When Trowbridge—Nelson's Trowbridge—boldly ran
His sea-worn bark beyond the ken of man,
His boy, devoted to the main and mast,
Passed o'er the self-same seas which he had passed,
Nor could the waves which forced the parent on,
Repel the adventurous ardour of the son.
So, on the Drama's gulf, with me for mate,
A gallant youth pursues a father's fate.
Reverse the Trowbridge fortunes on this deck;
The parent safe—preserve the son from wreck!
No more—too long, too tedious have I been
Through this unusual, serious, earnest scene.
In pure respect for a bright course well run,
Gently regard this enterprise begun,
And as you lov'd the sire, receive the son.

the happiness of jumping at once into public favour.* I need not enter into the particulars of my progress, as they are too well known to require recapitulation; and

* It is apparent from the correspondence of this period that Mathews's friends were by no means unanimous in approval of the step he had now taken. By some, his adoption of the stage as a profession was looked upon as being the very best thing he could have done, as it undoubtedly was. To others—and these principally ladies—it presented itself in a very different light. Three letters may here be given as typical of their respective classes, Sir William Molesworth and Lord Mulgrave representing the one side, and "the beautiful Miss Julia Macdonald" (mentioned in an already-quoted letter of the elder Mrs. Mathews) the other:

SIR W. MOLESWORTH TO CHARLES J. MATHEWS.

"My dear Mathews,

"I write to tell you how great and sincere is my gratification in finding that your success has been such as I expected, and as your talents merited. I trust, as a public man, your career may be long and prosperous. You have chosen most wisely in going on the stage, whither your inclination and your abilities evidently called you. Duppa—who is with me—desires me to say what pleasure he feels and how certain he was that you must be successful, and hopes that you will make a large fortune. You will, I suppose, soon forget all the valuable metaphysical knowledge that I attempted to cram you with, and in amusing the external world you will hardly agree in doubting its existence, but be persuaded that there is an unknown something which laughs at your jokes and enjoys your humour. May it long continue to do so, and amongst those unknown somethings believe that one of your sincerest friends and well-wishers is

"Yours truly,

"Wm. Molesworth.

"Tottcott, Launceston,
"December 12, 1835."

my object is not to follow the broad stream of my career, but to mark the shoals and undercurrents that affected its course. Over some of these shallows good taste

LORD MULGRAVE TO CHARLES J. MATHEWS.

"Normanby Lodge, Jan. 9, 1836.

"My dear Mathews,

"I regret much that I had to make my arrangements for coming into the country as to be obliged to miss this night at the theatre. Under these circumstances I wish to beg your acceptance of a copy of Shakspeare in memory of me and your first visit to *my dominions*. I hope this little reminiscence may be the rather valued as appropriate that I really think, as I was saying the other night, that you have more power of embodying the quaint humour of some of the original creations of his genius than anyone I ever saw. This remark I apply from little Peter, through Launcelot Gobbo and Dogberry up to the great Falstaff himself. It is difficult, in the present unfortunate state of the drama, to get a fair trial in any of them, especially as an overgrown theatre would not suit you. I feel peculiarly interested in your career on the stage from believing that I am a little answerable for having given you such continual opportunities of confirming your taste for it, at the same time, I trust that the practice you then acquired may have contributed to your present undoubted success. It is not easy to find at present that sort of thing that would exactly suit you, and what we cherished at Florence—'the Legitimate Drama'—in a small theatre. In the mean time I should be very sorry that you did not continue at the Olympic, where I hear you are doing so remarkably well, and where certainly I have, whenever I have been in England of late years, enjoyed more pleasant hours than in any theatre in London. But in the course of your provincial starring, avoid, as much as your line will allow you, heavy comedies; the audience are generally so bored with the whole affair that they are peculiarly spiteful against anyone who affects a gaiety they will not share; and, if you will allow your old manager to give you a bit of advice, in all parts of this description take more

dictates that I should skim very lightly; on others it is my earnest wish to dwell particularly, by way of apology for many things that without it would be open erroneous construction.

pains about your articulation. It should be rapid but never appear hurried.

"With this signal caution I have no doubt that with your buoyancy of spirit and activity of person you will be the best in this line, though I still think that your forte will ultimately be found to be characters of more marked description.

"Good-bye and success attend you.

"Yours very truly,

"MULGRAVE."

MISS JULIA MACDONALD TO CHARLES J. MATHEWS.

"Dover, Friday, 4th.

"And so you have given up all your friends and turned actor after all, my dear Charles Mathews. Well! it only just shows that one should not 'put one's faith in any son of man.' I disbelieved Miss Stephens's note, I would not hear of its being true. I contradicted George Tierney flatly, I jumped down everybody's throat, and took off everybody's head, till the first morning I read it in the paper, and then I own I was thunderstruck. It seems out of place to answer your gay note so seriously, but I have been so much annoyed, so much disappointed, I would have given a great deal (feeling the interest and regard we all do for you) if I could have undone the deed. I never for an instant thought any entreaty of the sincerest friend would have been of any avail if you had once taken into contemplation coming upon the stage; and therefore I hardly think I should have said '*Oh don't!*' had I even seen you wavering. But you appeared to take the same view of it that I did, and therefore, in allowing myself to make use of such eager expressions, I never thought they could cause you any annoyance. You did not, I am sure, wish to deceive me at that time; for I quite believe you had as little intention of

To show how little in this world we know what the future may bring about, I must go back for a moment to my last return from Italy. When slowly recovering from my long illness, I paid a visit to the Olympic with

going upon the stage at that time as I have at the present moment. But you deceived yourself, my dear friend, in thinking it was repugnant to your own feelings; for if you had had the detestation at the idea that I fancied up till now you really felt, no persuasions of Theodore Hook, or any other friend, would have had any weight with you. You will act beautifully I have no doubt; and your success, as far as that goes, I have no fears of; and I daresay you will become rich one of these days, and get a great deal of money in the meanwhile. This will perhaps make up to you for anything else—I mean for the many drawbacks your new profession entails with it. There were many who envied you the position that your father's high character, the education he had given you, and your own brilliant talents, had placed you in amongst the most distinguished in this country. Some were your own friends (Landseer for instance), and some were great folks who were angry at your being admitted into the same intimacy as themselves. These two sets, to be ill-natured to you (and as if to provoke us), always said, '*You'll see Charles Mathews will end by acting,*' and I defended the idea most warmly. But, *cher ami*, if you *would* act, why not act 'at home,' like your poor father, which is a higher walk? and why Madame V——? and why a minor theatre? I shall ever feel the deepest interest in hearing of the applause of which you are secure; but it will be long before I can make up my mind to go and see you in any other character than Charles Mathews that we have known so long and liked so much. And now we will quit a subject that is in vain any longer to annoy you with discussing. . . . Remember us kindly to your mother; and wishing you all the success in the world—of which I am quite sure, as must everyone be who knows you and knows how clever you are—believe me

"Affectionately and sincerely yours,

"J. M."

my father and mother. At the end of the performance I was carried down from the box in the arms of my Italian servant, and we were invited to wait in the little treasury of the theatre, in order to escape the crowd at the doors. After our departure a lady remarked to the stage-manager, looking after me as I was lifted into the carriage: "Ah! poor young man! it's all over with him —he's not long for this world!"

How astonished would that lady have been had she been told that she would be my wife for eighteen years, which, however, turned out to be the case.*

After two brilliant seasons in London, and a tour in the provinces, my wife and I were tempted by an offer from Mr. Price, the manager of the Park Theatre in New York, to go to America for a year, upon secured engagements amounting to £20,000, with the power of prolonging our stay there beyond that time if so inclined. The Olympic was handed over, for the time being, to the care of an efficient manager, till the success of our voyage should be ascertained. Mrs. Nisbett, Farren, and

* Mathews was married to Madame Vestris, who was some six years his senior, in 1838. Writing in 1876 to a correspondent who had enquired the date of his first marriage, Mathews said: "You will perhaps think the reason for my not answering you immediately rather an odd one. But the fact is, I could not for the life of me remember the date you desired. Accident has just furnished me with it. My marriage with Madame Vestris took place at Kensington Church, on the 18th July, 1838."

other popular favourites were engaged, and all looked *couleur de rose.*

After our arrival in America we had a month to spare, before appearing at the Park, and we removed—by the advice of Mr. Simpson, Price's partner, to the little village of Poughkeepsie, on the banks of the Hudson, in search of cool air and quiet. The hotel was situated in a pleasant nook, and the drives about it were charming.

The heat even here was intolerable, and we were advised to remove again to the Mountain House, a summer retreat on the top of the Catskill Mountains; and after a long steamboat run, were bumped and jolted up a half-made road of miles, in a half-made carriage crammed full of people, to the monster hotel at the top, where we arrived, with aching bones, just at nightfall, in search of cool and repose. Sounds of revelry met our ears as we approached, and on reaching the house, tired to death with our fatiguing journey, and covered with dust from head to foot, we had to make our way through a blaze of light and a host of elegantly-dressed men and women, who abandoned the illuminated ball-room, and lined the piazzas and corridors, to inspect the new arrivals. Through this bevy of strangers we sneaked as quickly as we could, in search of a room. A room! What an idea! The whole place was brimful and over-full, and every bed doubly occupied. Sitting-rooms were unknown; the

public saloons were the only resorts for meals and conversation, and repose and quiet were things never even inquired for. After writing our names in the book, for public inspection, the whole party was in a state of tumult, and "The Mathooses!" travelled from mouth to mouth with electric speed. A small bedroom was given up by one of the officials of the house. It was divided by a scanty Venetian blind from the public corridor, or piazza as they called it; and we were allowed, on the plea of ill-health, to have a cup of tea in it alone. This, it appeared, gave great offence; and there is no doubt we were greatly to blame in not at once putting on our ball dresses and joining the dancers.

It was clear this was no place for us, and a carriage was ordered to be ready immediately after breakfast, to bump us down again. This was not to be done privately. The guests were all up in arms and indignation. At the moment of departure, as we sallied forth into the corridor, we found it lined on each side, with eager faces turned towards us, to get at least one good stare at parting. We retreated for a moment, to hold a council of war, when a sympathising coloured waiter grinned with delight as he beckoned us down a back staircase to a lower corridor, through which we passed, leaving the mob of starers over our heads, popped into the carriage, and off we drove.

I need scarcely say this flagrant act was never forgiven, and what was worse, actually cost us £20,000.

Returning to Poughkeepsie, we took up our quarters again at the little hotel, and remained there quietly and harmlessly for the rest of the month, little imagining that a hurricane was brewing which was soon to sweep us from the great continent of America.

On our return to New York we found the whole city in a state of excitement respecting our unworthy selves, and to such a height was the public resentment carried, that we were actually warned by the newspapers not to attempt an appearance, as a riot would inevitably be the consequence. We had insulted the whole American people; and the details of a tour, which we had never made, had been published by the New York press, containing the most ridiculous allegations, without one word of truth to justify them. We were told that we had given serious offence at Saratoga Springs on our way to Niagara; that we had refused to sit at the public table, but at the same time had insisted that our servants should be admitted there, and that the visitors at the hotel, disgusted at the gross outrage, had been compelled to rise and leave the room.

On the last night of our engagement I answered this by saying that there were seventeen reasons why the alleged offence at Saratoga could not have been committed. The first was that we had never been there. I presumed the other sixteen reasons would not be required, but I was mistaken.

Convinced, however, that such nonsense could not

prevail against the simple assertion of its utter incorrectness, I insisted on our engagement being proceeded with, in spite of the positive threats I received, and the serious advice offered to dissuade me from the rash attempt.

The house was crammed to suffocation, and—alarming symptom—entirely by men. A riot was expected, and not a lady dared venture to be present. We met with a tremendous reception, and though some attempt at disapprobation was manifested, it was speedily quelled by the majority of the audience. I much wished to take the bull by the horns, and come to an explanation at once, but Mr. Simpson objected to this course; and as all had passed off quietly, he deemed it better not to agitate the question further. To this I reluctantly consented; but as he had to pay me a certain sum nightly, I felt he had the right to dictate what he thought best for his own interest. It was a mistake on his part, as the result proved.

We played our first engagement to good houses, the ladies gradually making their appearance, and all seemed right again. But a damp was thrown over the whole affair, and as a commercial speculation it turned out a failure to the management.

We then went to Philadelphia, where we had the same ordeal to go through, and to complete the matter, a great monetary crisis arrived, which struck a still more fatal blow to theatrical amusements generally;

and, in short, after two or three months, I determined to abandon all further attempt, and a farewell engagement was announced in New York. A better feeling now began to manifest itself, and I really believe the public became ashamed of the absurdity of the whole transaction. However, I was firm in my determination to return, and a crammed house, with a brilliant assemblage of ladies, graced our last appearance. At the conclusion of the performance, in a long speech,* I related all the facts I have mentioned, and bade them (as I then supposed) farewell for ever.

The effect was everything that could be desired, and I was cheered and applauded as if I had been the greatest favourite in the world, and I verily believe that if I had been allowed to address them in the same straightforward manner on the first night that I insisted on doing on the last, the scale would have turned at once in my favour.

Thus ended my bright scheme of speedy fortune, and thus began the series of troubles which were destined to clog a great portion of my life.

On our return to London we found the Olympic in a fainting state. During the five months we had been absent it had incurred a large amount of debt, besides having swallowed up the large sums I had remitted from America to bolster it up. Our reception, however, was most gratifying, and a short and most excellent season

* See Appendix A, page 279.

followed, but the fact soon stared us in the face, that there was no chance in so small a theatre of ever recouping the heavy loss that had been incurred during our absence, and Covent Garden being offered to us on most advantageous terms, we determined to transfer ourselves and our company, with scenery, dresses, and properties, to that house.*

The expenses of embellishment and previous preparation were enormous, but we were buoyed up with the most sanguine hopes of success.† We opened with

* See Appendix A, page 284.

† Mathews had hoped to enlist the services of his first stage comrade, and one of the greatest public favourites of his time, John Liston, for the Covent Garden campaign, but the veteran was not to be tempted from his well-earned retirement even by the son of his old friend. The letter in which this decision was communicated to Mathews is creditable alike to Liston's good sense and good taste, and may be commended to the attention of many stage favourites who are over fond of "reappearances" and "final performances" repeated again and again.

CHARLES J. MATHEWS TO J. LISTON.

"T. R. C. G., Dec. 18, 1839.

"My dear Mr. Liston,

"My mother has told me of one or two half-laughing conversations she has had with you on the subject of your delighting the public with a few performances. Jest sometimes leads to earnest, and on the principle of never throwing away a chance, I venture to send you this, to say, that should such a joyful occurrence be within the verge of possibility at any time, you may consider yourself King of Covent Garden; act when you please, what you please, and as long as you please; stop when you please, take what money you please, do what you please, and say what you please, and be sure that do whatever you please, you cannot fail to please. More than this I cannot

"Love's Labour's Lost," got up most elaborately, and

add, except that you shall be allowed to sweeten your own tea, and when you are too late for rehearsal, you shall beat the prompter. In plain English, and in sober earnest, if you will at any time make up your mind to gratify us by playing a few of your old parts, everything that mortals can do to make you comfortable and happy shall be done, and we shall feel most proud in being the caterers of a national treat.

"I will not bore you more—only say the word and we are 'at your feet.'

"Ever yours, with kind regards to Mrs. Liston, very truly, and very respectfully, "C. J. M."

J. LISTON TO CHARLES J. MATHEWS.

"St. George's Place, Dec. 19th, 1839.

"My dear Mr. Mathews,

"Notwithstanding the skill you exhibit in endeavouring to arouse my dormant vanity, be assured, once for all, it cannot prevail to overcome the unalterable determination I came to, when I quitted the stage, never to reappear before the public. Not only should I consider my reassuming the cap and bells, at my advanced age, a moral indecorum; my decaying strength also would render the experiment too hazardous; and I have no doubt, were Mr. Wakley, the coroner, to preside at an inquest on my remains, he would—as he did the other day, in the case of a poor old woman who drank herself to death—suggest the propriety of returning a verdict of Felo-de-se.

"Accept, however, my grateful thanks for your very liberal proposal, as well as for the terms in which the offer has been conveyed; they bring back a pleasing remembrance of the friendly position we stood in to each other a few years ago, to which, though for a time interrupted, we are, I trust, happily restored.

"Mrs. Liston joins me in sincerely hoping for the continual prosperity of you and yours, and believe me, once again, my dear Charles,

"Your Friend and well-wisher,

"J. Liston.

"C. J. Mathews, Esq."

admirably acted.* But the labour of love *was* lost, and the public did not respond to our efforts. We persevered, however, and produced several pieces to fill up the time while Sheridan Knowles's play of "Love," our first original production of importance, was being got up, in which Miss Ellen Tree was to make her first appearance. This was to be the touchstone, and no pains were spared to ensure its success.

And now the great millstone of involvement began to roll and gather enormous proportions. Money had to be procured at all hazards, and by every means, to prop up the concern till this new mine could be worked, and I was initiated for the first time in my life into all the mysteries of the money-lending art, and the concoction

* The following description of the opening night has been kindly furnished by Mr. James R. Anderson: "Monday, Sept. 30, 1839, Covent Garden opened with Shakespeare's comedy of 'Love's Labour's Lost.' It was an interesting and a trying selection; for no one, not even the oldest actor in the theatre, had ever seen it performed. The cast was strong, including Robert Keely, Bartley, Meadows, Granby, Cooper, Vining, &c. &c., and myself as Biron; Mesdames Nisbett, Vestris, Charles, Humby, Lee, Rainforth, &c. &c. The scenery, by Grieve and Sons, was beautiful in the extreme; the dresses splendid and appropriate, sketched by Planché; the materials and harmony of colour selected and arranged by Madame Vestris herself. The comedy must have been an immense success, but for one untoward circumstance — an awful mistake in theatrical policy — namely, that of *shutting up the one shilling gallery*, and excluding 'the gods' from their time-honoured benches on high Olympus. The admission to the

of those fatal instruments of destruction called bills of exchange. Duns, brokers, and sheriffs' officers soon entered upon the scene, and I, who had never known what pecuniary difficulty meant, and had never had a debt in my life before, was gradually drawn into the inextricable vortex of involvement—a web which, once thrown over a man, can seldom be thrown off again. This consequence was not conceived at the time. It was a great speculation, and great difficulties appeared the legitimate consequences. Every Saturday was looked forward to with terror, for on every Saturday I had to pay, including the company, authors, band, carpenters, and workmen employed before and behind the curtain, six hundred and eighty-four people! Six hundred and

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lower gallery had been reduced to one shilling and sixpence, in the hope to pacify and split the difference. No, sir; this sop to Cerberus could not be swallowed by the incensed deities, who would not be excluded from their old shilling gallery at 'the Garden' at any price. So, on the opening night, the enraged 'gods' filled the lower gallery to suffocation, and the demonstrations of indignation were terrific. The comedy was interrupted, often stopped, and all but 'damned' by the tremendous noise and uproar. At length, after many fruitless attempts to be heard and apologise, a man carrying a placard on a pole gave the malcontents to understand that the shilling gallery should be re-opened the following night. After three hearty cheers from the conquerors, the play was allowed to proceed and finish. This came too late, for the poor play had received its quietus in the very first act. And 'Love's Labour's Lost' appeared a most appropriate title, for it ran only a few nights."

eighty-four souls, with their wives and families, all dependent upon my exertions! *

The play appeared and was successful, but a week or two proclaimed the awful fact that it was not a hit, and the houses, though respectable, were not only insufficient to meet the great expenses of the theatre, but utterly destructive of all hope of repaying the previous losses and liabilities.

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* The list of the persons thus employed has been preserved, and is given here as a curious piece of theatrical statistics:

THEATRE ROYAL, COVENT GARDEN.

A Return of all Persons engaged in this Establishment during the Week ending 26th December, 1840.

Company—Gentlemen			38
„ Chorus Singers			8
„ Ladies			34
Band			32
Officers			9
Box-keepers			2
Check and Money takers			15
Bradwell's Department:			
Workers	60		
Supers	22 = 82		82
Scenery Department (Painting-room)			10
Sloman's Department:			
Carpenters	26		
For working Pantomime	80		
Cassidy	1 = 107		107

Prostrated by this discovery, I sought the counsel of a solicitor, an old friend of my father's, who advised me instantly to bring the thing to an end, gather in all the bills and other undertakings I had incurred, and wind up the speculation without a moment's delay. To this task I applied myself, but while occupied in the examination of the accounts, and making out a sort of balance

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Gentlemen's Wardrobe:			
Workers	24		
Dressers	14		
Extras	18 = 56		56
Ladies' Wardrobe:			
Workers		42	
Dressers		14	
Attendants		2	
Mrs. Thomas and Mrs. Lewis		2 = 60	60
Supers (per Hormer):			
"Midsummer Night's Dream"		52	
Pantomime		37 = 89	89
Extra Chorus and Band			13
Property Department			4
Printers, Billstickers, Upholsterers, Housekeeper, &c.			57
Watch and Fire men			5
Police			4
Attendants at Bar, &c., in Drysdale's employment:			
Boxes	16		
Pit	18		
Gallery	8 = 42		42
Place-keepers			7
Box-keepers (Deputies)			10
		Total	684

sheet, the "Beggar's Opera"* was produced as an afterpiece, backing up the play of "Love." It was the first time since its original production that it had been dressed in the original costume, and it was a wonderful hit. In an instant, to the surprise of everyone, ourselves included, up went the receipts, the houses were crammed, and a long and successful run was the consequence. The corner was turned, the public responded to our efforts, and we sailed once more before the wind.

From this moment success upon success followed rapidly; the pantomime and the "Merry Wives of Windsor"† filled the treasury for months, and brought the season to a brilliant conclusion. All was sunshine to everyone but poor me. The greater the success the worse I found my position. As soon as the money began to flow in my sufferings became almost intolerable. At the first sniff of blood the tigers were let loose. While I paid no one, no one seemed to care; but the

* The success of the "Beggar's Opera" is not surprising when the cast of the characters is considered:

Captain Macheath	Mr. W. Harrison.
Peachum	Mr. W. Farren.
Lockit	Mr. Bartley.
Filch	Mr. Harley.
Polly Peachum	Miss Rainforth.
Lucy Lockit	Madame Vestris.

† In this revival Mathews was the Slender, and Bartley the Falstaff; while Mrs. Ford, Mrs. Page, and Ann Page were played by Mrs. Nisbett, Madame Vestris, and Miss Rainforth.

moment Jenkins got his money Jones became rampant. "Why pay Jenkins? Why not pay *me?* You've used me shamefully, and you must take the consequences." Multiply the Jenkinses by tens and the Joneses by hundreds, and the sum total of persecution may be conceived. Writs and executions showered upon me, and the whole proceeds of our country engagements were swallowed up by the ravenous Jenkinses and Joneses, without in any way appeasing their cravings.

The next season was to set all straight, and a capital one it was. "London Assurance," * and other hits, assured our position, and gained confidence for the management. The receipts were all that could be desired, and, had there been no arrears to pay off, would

* The original cast of Boucicault's "London Assurance," which was played for the first time March 4th, 1841, was indeed remarkably strong:

Sir Harcourt Courtly	Mr. W. Farren.
Charles Courtly	Mr. J. Anderson.
Max Harkaway	Mr. G. Bartley.
Dolly Spanker	Mr. Keeley.
Dazzle	Mr. C. J. Mathews.
Mark Meddle	Mr. Harley.
Grace Harkaway	Madame Vestris.
Lady Gay Spanker	Mrs. Nisbett.
Pert	Mrs. Humby.

The play is described in *The Times* notice as having kept the audience in a roar from the beginning to the end, when "Mr. Lee Moreton, the author, was led forward, eyeing the enthusiastic multitude with considerable nervousness."

have been ample for all purposes. But alas! there was a monster in the shape of sixty per cent., whose hydra heads could never be amputated, and by the time I had acquired sufficient knowledge of the world to see my error, it was too late to retrieve it. Thousands were paid, it is true—but how? Swept away in interest and legal expenses, and my life was spent in the agreeable company of sheriffs' officers. How many times have I gone upon the stage with a heavy heart to act, with a merry face, the very part in jest that I was playing behind the scenes in earnest! and not a sympathetic soul to pity me. On the contrary, everyone seemed to believe that I revelled in it, and every allusion I had to make to duns and bailiffs was hailed by the audience as the emanation of a light heart, and the most unctuous enjoyment. Had I been a tragedian, and walked on with a melancholy air and serious face, I should have had credit for feeling my unfortunate position. "Poor fellow! see how down he is!" But the painfully successful effort of assuming gaiety and joyousness, difficult and galling as it was, robbed me at once of all sympathy. "Pooh! look at him; he doesn't care. He's in his element! He likes it!"

I might relate a thousand stories of my hairbreadth 'scapes and adventures with a class of professors wholly unknown, happily, to a large portion of the population, and whose names inspire terror to those who do not know them; officers of the Jewish persuasion, who are

supposed to represent the majesty of the Law in its most forbidding shape, but to whom I have been indebted for so many acts of kindness that I have frequently blessed my stars that they were interposed between me and the tomahawking Christians by whom they were employed, and from whom no mercy could have been extracted. I have had two of those functionaries in adjacent rooms, and have borrowed the money from one to pay out the other, with many such like incidents.

Even the borrowing money at sixty per cent. is not so easy an operation as some people may think, nor unattended with risk and worry, worse even than the frightful percentage. When not compelled to take a portion of it in wine or paving-stones, the getting the money *when* you want it is by no means so simple. I remember after a week or two of very hot weather, and consequent empty benches, I had occasion to borrow a couple of hundred pounds to patch up the Saturday's treasury. I applied to a professional discounter on the Wednesday.

"Ah, Mr. Mathews! How d'ye do, Mr. Mathews? Glad to see you. Have a glass of sherry?"

"No, thank you. I want a couple of hundred pounds to-morrow."

"Certainly, Mr. Mathews, with pleasure, Mr. Mathews. How long do you want it for? Have a glass of sherry?"

"Say three months."

"What security?"

"None."

"Very good. I must have a warrant of attorney."

"Of course."

"All right, Mr. Mathews. Look in at twelve to-morrow and I'll have it ready. Do have a glass of sherry!"

Without the slightest belief in any such promptitude, I looked in at twelve—one of his great points being to have my carriage drive up to his door as often as possible, that his neighbours might see his importance.

"Well, Mr. Mathews, I find I can't manage the £200. I can only let you have £150. I had no idea I was so short at my banker's—account actually overdrawn. But I've got a friend to do it for you—it's all the same." Sheridan's "unconscionable dog" of a friend was always sure to figure in. "He'll be here directly. Bless me! How long he is. Have a glass of sherry? Are you going back to the theatre? I'll bring him with me in half an hour."

The day passes of course, and no sign of either my friend or my friend's friend. This is Thursday. On Friday the same scene. "Didn't come till too late—but all right. You don't want it till to-morrow, you know. What's your treasury hour?"

"Two."

"Be here at twelve and it shall be ready."

Saturday at twelve. "Here I am according to appointment."

"All right, Mr. Mathews. Have a glass of sherry? My nephew Dick is gone to the City for the cheque."

"But it is past one now."

"You go on. I'll be with you as the clock strikes two."

Two, three, four o'clock, and no signs of the money, the salaries remaining unpaid to the amount promised. Then a note to say he will be with me at six to the moment. At seven, just as I am going on the stage, in he comes breathless.

"Such a job Dick's had for you, Mr. Mathews! However, here I am with the money. My friend disappointed me, but I managed without him. My nephew will read over the warrant of attorney."

"But I'm just going on the stage; there's no time now."

"Won't take five minutes. Dick, read the warrant. Now here is the money. Now, let's see—£15 left off the old account."

"Oh, pray don't deduct that now."

"Better, Mr. Mathews, better, keeps all square, you know—that's £15. Then the interest, three months, £17 10s. and £15—£32 10s. Warrant of attorney, £7 10s.—that's £40. Then my nephew's fee, £1 1s., and my trouble, say £1—£42 1s. Here's 15s.—that's £42 16s. Dick, have you got 4s.?"

"I've got 3s. 6d."

"That will do. I've got 6d.—that's £43; and £7 cash makes the £50."

"Yes; but I only get £7 odd."

"Never mind—keeps all square. Now the £100. Here's a cheque of Gribble and Co. on Lloyds for £25 10s."

"Oh, what's the use of a cheque at this time of night?"

"Good as the bank—same as money—you can pay it as money. Fifty sovereigns makes £75 10s., and a £10 note makes £85 10s. Stay, it ought to be £95 10s. Oh, here's another £10 note, I'd forgot. There you are, £95 10s. Only wants £4 10s. to make up the hundred. You haven't got £4 10s. about you, have you, Mr. Mathews, you could lend me till the morning, just to get it straight, you know?"

"I believe I have. There are four sovereigns and ten shillings in silver."

"That's all right; £4 makes £99 10s., and 10s.—stop, let's count them—count after your own father, as the saying is—five and four's nine, and three fourpenny pieces; all right. Stop, one's a threepenny. Got a penny? or a post-office stamp? Never mind, I won't be hard upon you for the penny. There you are, all comfortable. Good evening."

I paid away the cheque "as money." Two days afterwards I got an indignant note to say the cheque

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has been dishonoured. In high dudgeon I sent for my friend the discounter. To my surprise he appeared with the greatest alacrity.

"Not paid! Gribble's cheque not paid! Some mistake—it's as good as the bank. Here, give it me. I'll get it for you in five minutes. How long shall you be here?"

"An hour."

"I'll be back in twenty minutes."

Need I say that I never saw anything more of my friend or the cheque? He had totally disappeared, with the only proof against him safe in his pocket.

This is one of many similar instances, and is in no way overcoloured.*

On one occasion I was told a "gentleman" wished to speak to me. A "gentleman" was always a suspicious announcement—I won't say on the principle of *Lucus a non lucendo*, from his being generally the most ungentle of men—but a "gentleman" who had no name to send up, and who always met you with the fatal inquiry, "Mr. Mathews?" offered as good presumptive evidence of a sheriff's officer, as if he had had a photograph of Cursitor Street stamped on his forehead. However, a gentleman I found him. "I am sorry to

* The money-lender did not always get the best of it on these occasions. An entry in one of Mathews's diaries, under date Jan. 1843, says: "Called on L. Levy to pay him £30; borrowed £20 instead."

trouble you, Mr. Mathews," said he quietly, "but I have a duty to perform, and I am sure you are too much a man of the world to quarrel with me. I have a writ against you for a hundred pounds, and must request immediate payment or the pleasure of your company elsewhere." "Quite impossible," said I, "at this moment to meet it; but I will consult with my treasurer, and see what can be done." "Excuse me," said he, "but I cannot lose sight of you, and whatever is to be done must be done here. Come, pay the money, and there's an end." "It can't be done," said I. "Why didn't you get him to renew the bill?" said he. "He wouldn't renew it," said I; "nothing would induce him." "Nonsense!" said he. "Accept this bill for the same amount, and put your own time for payment, and I'll undertake to get you his receipt." "Agreed!" said I, and accepted the bill, which without another word he took up, threw down the receipt, and walked towards the door. "Stop," said I; "you said you could not leave me without the money! What does this mean?" "It means," said he, "that I paid your debt, as I knew you couldn't; and now you owe it *me* instead. Be punctual, and I'll do as much again."

On another occasion a vindictive tradesman whom I had "used shamefully"—a technical phrase adopted in all cases where harsh measures are taken without sufficient reason, and no other excuse can be offered for suddenly enforcing payment, accompanied his officer to

the door and waited outside to feast his eyes upon the sight of my arrest. The debt was for a very large sum for goods supplied to the theatre, and quite impossible to meet at the moment. "There is no help for it," said I; "the money cannot be paid now, and I must submit." "Can't you pay part of it?" said the officer. "Oh, I have offered that over and over again, but not one penny less than the whole amount will he take." "Can't you let me have £10?" said the officer. "Of course I can," said I; "but what then?" "No matter," said he, "give it me." I handed the money over, and he disappeared. I saw nothing of him for a month. "Can you give me another £10?" "Certainly," said I, and away he went again. From time to time, at distant periods, he presented himself with the same demand, till at length the whole amount was paid; and with excusable curiosity I asked for the key to the mystery, when I found that, as in the former case, the officer, disgusted with the outrageous vindictiveness of the frantic creditor, had paid the money himself and had given me the time I required. The *suaviter in modo* had triumphed over the *fortiter in re*, and the sheriff had again reason to be proud of his officer.

The third season now came, and I confidently calculated that with the same amount of success I should at length emancipate myself from debt and have solid hope for the future. Miss Adelaide Kemble appeared for the first time on the English stage, and

her triumph was complete.* Little did that amiable

* The following letter from this gifted lady will be read with interest, if only for its mention of "Benedict, a pupil of Weber's," who has since been long and honourably known to the public as Sir Julius Benedict.

ADELAIDE KEMBLE TO CHARLES J. MATHEWS.

"40, Clarges Street, July 23rd, 1841.

"DEAR MR. MATHEWS,

"I am just returned to town, and hasten to answer your two very amiable communications. I am sorry not to be able to do as you wish about the benefit, and I think it quite ungenerous of you to be so open and obliging about it, for it makes my necessary adhesion to the point really painful to me. Should my two months' engagement with you be renewed, as I hope may be the case, I shall be very willing to take my benefit in the second two months. Of course I should not dream of acting anywhere but at Covent Garden; but with the exception of Drury Lane and Exeter Hall, shall consider myself at liberty to sing at any concerts on the days I do not act.

"Of course I shall not sing in concerts in London previous to my *début* at your theatre. I have looked over the libretto of Balfe's opera; but it is difficult to form any idea of an opera without having seen a note of the music. I confess I do not at all see what I can do with the part, which does not strike me as being suited to my capabilities.

"Do tell me if you would be willing to engage a most able friend of mine as director of the music at your theatre. Benedict was a pupil of Weber's, is himself an excellent composer, and a most conscientious artist and gentlemanlike person. I think it would be a great thing to have him. Will you let me know what you think of this suggestion?

"Pray thank Mrs. Mathews very cordially for the kind wishes and intentions she expresses about me; and with our united compliments to yourself and her, believe me,

"Very faithfully yours,

"ADELAIDE KEMBLE."

lady imagine that her triumph would be my ruin, but so it turned out. The proprietors of Covent Garden, who had previously been content to be, as it were, sharers in our speculation by making the rent easy to us, now saw that they could do without us. The theatre was well stocked, and in perfect order. Miss Kemble's father was one of the proprietors, and under his management, with the brilliant attraction of his talented daughter, they could get on very well without us. The blow was soon announced. The theatre was taken out of our hands, after three years of outlay and labour to establish it, in order that others might reap the expected harvest; our property was all confiscated to meet the alleged arrears of rent, amounting to £14,000—the scenery, wardrobe, and properties we had brought from the Olympic included—and we found ourselves adrift, with nothing left but a piece of plate (presented by the company) and the debts of the concern.*

* Mr. James R. Anderson, the sole survivor of the brilliant company by whom "London Assurance" was first played, writes in the highest terms of the management of Mathews and Vestris: "Madame was an admirable manager, and Charles an amiable assistant. The arrangements behind the scenes were admirable. The dressing-rooms were perfect; the attendants well chosen; 'the wings' kept clear of all intruders—no strangers or crutch and toothpick loafers allowed behind to flirt with the ballet-girls; only a very few private friends were allowed the privilege of visiting the green-room, which was as handsomely furnished as any nobleman's drawing-room, and those friends appeared always in evening dress. Dear old Charles Young (the tragedian), Planché, Sheridan Knowles, Leigh Hunt, Edwin

The result of the speculation was as follows:

The first season was—sowing.

The second—hoeing.

The third—owing.

The debts being called in, to my dismay, assumed, when added to the amount claimed for arrears of rent, the gigantic form of some £30,000! I stood aghast and helpless. Such a contingency had never suggested itself, and there was no remedy for me but the insolvent court.

How easy and cheerful it sounded! "You must go through the court," said everybody. One might have thought it was St. Martin's Court they meant; it was so very simple. Like taking a cold bath—so pleasant. Let no innocent misguided being be deceived by the lightness of the phrase; let none mistake its import. No momentary feeling of relief, no after reflection, can ever remove the indelible stain left by the horror and degradation it involves.

And yet it was made as gentle to me, in every way, as I believe was possible. In the first place I was saved

Landseer and his brother, and a few intimate friends of Charles Mathews, were about all I ever saw there. There was great propriety and decorum observed in every part of the establishment, great harmony, general content prevailed in every department of the theatre, and universal regret was felt when the admirable managers were compelled to resign their government. Two more capable, competent, and admirable people never before or since managed a theatre." See Appendix A, page 285.

from an initiation to the Queen's Bench prison. A wild young nobleman, who had been sentenced to confinement there for some early prank, had fitted up a room over the porter's lodge into a really elegant little boudoir, and interest was made to get it for me.

Under any other circumstances such a pleasant nook for a week's retirement from the world might not have been undesirable; but the idea of a key being turned upon one at once put to flight all notions of the agreeable. The solitary moonlight walk was the most welcome part of the entertainment. The flood of reminiscences, actualities, and future calculations that crowded and jostled each other, were like the fitful confusion of a dream.

After a week spent in this anything but romantic retreat, which had at all events the advantage of solitude —no small balm to a wounded heart—and about a month subsequently passed in the green fields of the country, till the result of my step was ascertained, the day of emancipation arrived, and without a word of reproach or opposition, the burthen of debt was removed from my shoulders, and I walked the earth a new-born babe.

Now what do you suppose was the first step taken by this new-born babe? The very last, it appears, it ought to have taken. But alas! in this world no one's experience is of any use to one but one's own.

Released as I was from the enormous load of difficulty that had bowed me to the ground, I sprang up

again sanguine and elate, and without hesitation immediately committed not only an illegal act, but one so imprudent that twelve years of industry were unable to repair it. Separating the debts belonging to the Covent Garden speculation from those which were of a personal character, and which I considered myself bound in honour to discharge, I at once gave securities for the various amounts, and made myself liable for three or four thousand pounds, in the full confidence that from those to whom I had behaved so honourably, I could meet with nothing but indulgence and consideration in carrying out my undertakings. This was a grave mistake. I had taken the very worst course that could be hit upon. Had I kept the power in my own hands, and from time to time paid off what I could afford, I should soon have accomplished my object and redeemed my good name. But bills of exchange were negotiable, and rather than run the chance of waiting for their maturity, they were handed to ravenous discounters, for the sake of immediate cash, and sold to the highest bidders, in many instances for a third of their amount. The consequence was, that instead of the unlimited time I calculated on from grateful natures, I soon found myself at the mercy of the purchasers, who had speculated upon my unpunctuality, and, in the course of a twelvemonth, the three or four thousand became ten or twelve by the magic of law and accumulated interest. In vain I worked incessantly in the provinces and laboured in London. I was in the

toils again, and so intolerable did my position become, that, goaded to the quick by the injustice and ingratitude of my tormentors, in a fit of despair I relinquished a fine engagement we were then playing at the Haymarket, and at a moment's notice fled to France.

I had been advised that I could better bring my creditors to reason by withdrawing myself from their jurisdiction. This was a graver error than the other, and I discovered my mistake in a moment. After addressing a letter through the newspapers to the holders of my securities, offering terms, and stating my determination not to return to England till they were accepted,* I found that I had only jumped out of the fryingpan into the fire, for I was no safer abroad than at home, as all legal documents could be passed to foreign holders, and be enforced more rigidly on that side of the water than on this. I therefore at once retraced my steps, and threw myself on the protection of a commissioner in bankruptcy to make terms for me. A sort of letter of licence was thus obtained, by which I was to set aside £1,300 a year out of our future earnings, and a little breathing time was thus granted.

I found it no easy matter to carry out this arrangement, and the Lyceum becoming vacant at the moment, I resolved once more to try the chances of management in a theatre where the expenses would not be so overwhelming as at Covent Garden, and the profit more

* See Appendix A, page 287.

certain. *More* certain! Why, it was a fortune! Everybody said so—it couldn't be avoided! And to work I went on this new treadmill—for such it turned out to be, as every step I took in the ascent to fortune only dropped me a peg lower on the ladder.*

For seven years we worked day and night, and with unvarying success, but the want of capital to fall back upon was for ever the drawback upon our efforts. Every piece had to be got up upon credit, and the outlay had always to be repaid before a profit could be realised; and all the large receipts accruing from the brilliant houses from Christmas to Easter were more than swallowed up by the utter blank that followed from Easter to Michaelmas.† The stone was no sooner rolled up to the top of the hill than down it went to the bottom again.

During these seven years, buoyed up by hope, I

* The Lyceum was opened on October 18, 1847, with "The Light Dragoons," in which Mathews played; "The Two Queens," supported by Harley, Charles Selby, and Mrs. Stirling; and "The Pride of the Market," with Madame Vestris, Leigh Murray, and J. B. Buckstone. It appears from the playbill that the "no fees" system is older than is generally supposed. "No money will be allowed to be received by the boxkeepers on any pretence whatever" was the rule at the Lyceum two-and-thirty years ago.

† A return of the receipts for the first three seasons, including saloons, &c., gives these figures: Season 1847–1848, 226 nights, £25,863; season 1848–1849, 244 nights, £23,691; season 1849–1850, 210 nights, £21,059; or a nightly average respectively of £114, £97, and £100.

battled with my fate, and made head against increasing difficulty, till one heavy fall of snow at Christmas spared me the trouble of continuing my exertions. An overwhelming loss was the consequence, the season was destroyed, a heavy debt incurred, and at length an impatient creditor did for me in five minutes what it had cost me twelve of the best years of my life to avert, and I found myself a bankrupt. Sick at heart, and almost pleased at the termination of the eternal worry and turmoil I had undergone, I bowed my head to the storm and thought all was over.

Not at all. Friends appeared in sight, and an extraordinary movement in my favour was announced. Faith was declared in my honesty of intention, and sympathy awakened by my unceasing industry and courage. The theatre must be preserved for us, and a prospect for the future opened under a more brilliant aspect. A number of gentlemen, I was informed, had come to the rescue, and had commenced a subscription, from which they felt assured two or three thousand pounds would be amassed, and presented to us by way of capital to recommence with—provided always, as the lawyers say, that the result of my appearance in the Bankruptcy Court should be honourable to myself, and confirmatory of the causes of failure in the speculation.

But in the meantime the theatre must be secured, and £900 must be put down at once to obtain the lease, and security for £1,000 more given as guarantee for the

fulfilment of the covenants. One gentleman at once paid the money and gave the necessary security; merely requiring from me in return a pledge that the theatre should be opened in due course, and the sums advanced and secured be repaid from the capital about to be handed over to me; while another gentleman put down £500 for preliminary expenses.

A first-class certificate was awarded me. A brilliant benefit was given us, at which every manager in London assisted, either in person or by the contribution of a piece from his theatre, performed by his company, and the public responded to the call in the most gratifying manner; and we again found ourselves managers of the Lyceum.

Was not this a pleasing termination to my difficulties? Termination? It was the beginning of fresh disaster.

How about the capital? A change had come over the spirit of the dream. A discussion had arisen as to the manner in which the subscription should be carried out. The discussion had led to a misunderstanding among the subscribers, the misunderstanding had led to an altercation; and the end was that the enthusiastic friends who had so nobly come to the rescue fell off in different directions, and ultimately wholly disappeared, leaving poor Pilgarlick in the mire. His grace the Duke of Devonshire, with his usual kindness and consideration, forwarded his subscription, declaring that the object in view being to serve me, he thought the manner

of doing it was immaterial, and a few gentlemen followed his example, but the rest of my self-elected benefactors vanished into thin air.

Here was I then saddled with the lease of the theatre again, and a new debt of a couple of thousand pounds before opening the doors. A charming prospect! I at once objected to embark afresh in what I knew could only lead to fresh ruin, and to put my foot upon a tread-mill where I had worn out so many pairs of shoes before. But the fulfilment of my promise was exacted, and I was called upon to sacrifice myself upon the altar of hopeless speculation, in order that the money advanced might be repaid. With a heavy heart, and unsupported by a hope of any kind, I again began the old life of difficulty and involvement, leading inevitably, at no distant period, to the old result. But as soon as I found that the fatal nucleus was forming, I took a bold resolve, and defying consequences, abruptly brought the season to a close, shut the doors and cut management for ever.*

* This determination was made public in the following broadside:

"Royal Lyceum Theatre.—Mr. Charles Mathews begs to return his grateful thanks to the public for the patronage bestowed upon this theatre since its reopening, but regrets to be obliged to announce that, notwithstanding the uniform success which has attended all the pieces produced, he considers it a duty both to himself and others to retire without loss of time from the lesseeship. The long and serious illness of Mrs. Mathews, which has unfortunately deprived him of her assistance in the management, as well as of her talent on the stage (both of which he has ever found indispensable to the welfare of the enterprise), and the want of capital to fall back upon

I did not, however, come out undamaged even from this short campaign, and trouble enough I had to ward off the effects of the brief struggle. I accepted an engagement at Drury Lane, and for a season danced to the old tune with duns and bailiffs, till my legs ached again. The kindness of the public alone supported me in all these trials, and as I still retained their unceasing favour, as well as my health and spirits, I jogged on without complaining.

But an event was at hand, compared to which all the petty sufferings of the previous twenty years sank into insignificance. I perhaps ought to pass it over in silence, but it is a tragedy of real life that should be related, if only to complete the history of my endurance, and to show to what depths of degradation a man of honour may be subjected when once plunged by his

when the pressure of the times, the inclemency of the weather, or other unavoidable and not unfrequent circumstances have reduced the receipts below the expenditure, are the principal causes which have induced him to give up the speculation. It would be perfect madness in him, after the lesson he has so lately received, to run the risk of again involving himself, while it would be most unjust to his brother artists, whose friendship and cordiality have supported and cheered him through all his difficulties, were he to trifle further with their prospects. He, therefore, most reluctantly abandons the field in which he has laboured incessantly for seven years and a half, and upon which so many thousands have been expended; and seeing no hope of ever receiving the slightest reward for the labour he has bestowed, and the anxiety he has endured, he bids adieu to the cares of management at once, and for ever!

"March 24th, 1855."

own ignorance and imprudence into pecuniary difficulty. Had my object ever been to avoid paying I should have had nothing to complain of, but my constant endeavour was to pay, and my only crime was, that I could not do so quickly enough.

I had arrived at Preston in Lancashire to fulfil an engagement, and after a long rehearsal and a hasty dinner at the hotel, had just poured out a cup of tea before going to the theatre.* My servant had just announced to me the pleasing fact that the doors were open, and that the house was crammed in every part. I sent him forward, and was preparing to follow, when a brisk knock at the door announced a visitor. A smart cheerful man presented himself. "Mr. Mathews, I believe?" "Exactly. "I am sorry to say I am a sheriff's officer, and have a writ against you for £400, which I am charged to execute." I was paralysed. "But," said I, "I am just going to the theatre; can't you wait till the end of the performance?" "Impossible," said he; "that's the very thing I am instructed not to do. I could have served the writ early this morning, but my orders were peremptory not to do so till after the audience were assembled.† I must request

* The date was July 4th, 1856.

† The creditor, who took such especial pains to display his vindictiveness against Mathews, did not probably give much thought to the unfortunate manager of the Preston Theatre. In any case the arrest of his star actor would have been a serious matter; but, postponed as it was until the very last moment, when the audience was

your company immediately to Lancaster Castle." "Why," said I, "that must be twenty miles off at least!" "It is," said he; "but the train is just going, and we haven't a moment to lose." "The train!" I exclaimed; "surely at least we can go there in a chaise, without so public an exhibition?" With difficulty he yielded, and, instructing my servant to follow by rail, in a state of bewilderment I set forth for my destination. My companion assured me that I should meet with every attention, and that he would speak to the governor of the Castle, and obtain for me a private room where I should be as comfortable as in my own house. I felt quite sure I should! Night came on, a drizzling rain accompanied it, and we arrived in gloomy silence, about eleven o'clock, at the dismal frowning tower of John of Gaunt's castle, whose heavy portals soon closed upon us. The governor had retired for the night, but my companion succeeded in gaining access to him. An angry dialogue reached my ears, and I soon learned that I had nothing to hope from that quarter. Private

actually seated, and when considerable expense had been incurred, it was a crushing blow. In a letter written shortly after his arrest, Mathews thus describes the consequences: "The poor manager at Preston is ruined by it. He did not get the intelligence in time to stop the audience from entering the theatre, and there was a tremendous house! Every soul immediately left it, although he offered to play some of their own pieces, in the hope that out of pity for him they would have remained. *Not* a bit of it. Out they all went and had their money returned, with the exception of £4 10s. in the pit and

room indeed! such a thing had never been heard of. My companion was severely reprimanded for so preposterous a proposal, and speedily made his exit, leaving me alone in the gloomy vaulted chamber with the turnkey.

This functionary at once took down a bunch of keys such as I had only seen before in melodramas, and, beckoning me to follow him, without a word unlocked the massive door. In consternation I followed. A long stone corridor presented itself, open to the sky at the top—through which the rain now descended in torrents—and enclosed on each side with solid iron gratings, beyond which I could descry nothing, the dismal lantern of the jailer throwing a faint light only round our feet. Grating after grating was unlocked and clanked to again, the rain all the time descending on our heads. We then came to a flight of stone steps, and loud sounds of revelry met my ear. Uproarious choruses were being sung, and were intermingled with peals of laughter, which increased in distinctness as we ascended the cold steps.

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gallery, who remained, making the matter worse, as with heavy hearts they had to go through the performance. Only *one* gentleman remained in the dress boxes. Egan bore the matter very kindly, and came over to see me to-day, full of sympathy and cheering expressions. I shall always remember his very friendly and disinterested conduct. The poor man had been doing wretched business latterly, and looked to these two nights to retrieve him. He had already spent and paid away much of the money, having received £30 for places taken before the box-office closed."

On the second landing a large doorway, with a solid iron grating, presented itself, and by the light of the lantern I saw a crowd of what I supposed to be lunatics in white nightgowns and cotton nightcaps clinging to the bars, shouting and gesticulating I knew not what. "Hold your noise!" said the turnkey, banging the gigantic bunch of keys against the iron bars, and away these spectres slunk into the dark space beyond. I asked no questions, but ascended yet another flight of steps, where a similar sight presented itself, and to my horror I saw him apply the key to the door and motion me to enter.

"In here?" I said in amazement, for I could not believe it was reality. "In with you!" was the harsh reply, and in a moment I heard the heavy grating clang behind me, and the prodigious key turned upon it. A shout then arose that made the vaulted roof ring again: "A new bird! a new bird!" was screamed from mouth to mouth, with imitations, more or less happy, of the crowing of cocks in every key; and I was ushered by some forty or fifty rough men, in their nightshirts and cotton caps, through two rooms, closely furnished with small narrow beds, to an inner receptacle similarly provided. To my dismay I was instantly recognised, and coarse jokes respecting "Used Up" and the "Game of Speculation" were bandied about. A few good-humoured fellows set to work and made me up a bed on trestles in the centre of the room, the others sitting cross-legged on their own

pallets, watching the operation, and indulging in highly spiced and much approved witticisms on the occasion. With faint half-uttered thanks I threw myself, dressed and wet as I was, on the miserable rickety couch, and passed such a night as can never be described or forgotten. The solitude of a dungeon would have been bliss at the moment, but such luxury was not to be granted.

At daybreak the keys were heard again, and in ten minutes the cells were cleared, and we were conducted *en masse* up still another flight of steps, to an enormous lofty hall, formerly John of Gaunt's banqueting room, with a long wooden table set out for breakfast, a gigantic open fireplace on one side, at which cooking was going on, and a Brobdingnag sink on the other, at which these jail birds were performing their ablutions by splashing the water in their faces with their hands, and drying them on a huge jack-towel which hung on a roller by its side. My heart revolted at the sight, and I could hardly believe the evidence of my senses. Were these men convicts? Was I a felon? What could it all mean?

The windows of the hall, ten or fifteen feet from the ground, admitted light and air, but none were low enough to look through.

The room was roughly furnished with chairs and tables, and the bare stone walls were hung with hats, caps, carpet-bags, fencing-foils, boxing-gloves, single-sticks, fiddles, and other significant evidences that the inmates

were not all plunged in deep despair, but there was no corner into which I could shrink unobserved, and give way to the bitterness of my feelings. This then was the end of all! Imagination could go no further. It seemed impossible that I could be in England in the nineteenth century.

The whole arrangements were as for convicts. We were watched by turnkeys appointed for the purpose, who visited us every half-hour. The governor inspected us once a day, as did also the chaplain and doctor. Visitors were locked into a small stone room with an iron door to it—a condemned cell, having a small square window into the lobby, at which a turnkey stood to keep guard and observe what passed within, and to see that no spirits or tobacco should be conveyed to the prisoners, nothing being allowed to be introduced at visiting hours. All linen and stores were to be brought at eight in the morning, at which hour the market people came to the iron grating, beyond which no one was permitted to pass, and through the bars of which everything was handed. Any friend coming at that hour was obliged to bring an egg or a potato in his hand, or he was not allowed to pass the outer gate, half an hour only being allotted for the ceremony. Anything more ridiculous as well as revolting can scarcely be conceived.

As soon as the wretched bedrooms were cleared, at six in the morning, they were locked up again, and no one suffered to re-enter them until they were unlocked

at half-past nine at night, at which hour all were sent to bed. On Sunday we were all turned out of the general room and locked up in another, and then taken in procession to the chapel, where we were locked into the pews, the female prisoners in the gallery below and the actual convicts in a place by themselves—all parted off so that no class could see the other. The turnkey officiated as clerk, with his bunch of keys on the desk by the side of his prayer-book, making altogether a perfect Hogarthian picture. In short, except that we were neither handcuffed nor fettered, no malefactors, no felons, could have been more severely treated.*

I can truly say I was nearly driven to madness by the fencing, boxing, and fiddling that was continually

* In a letter dated July 7, 1856, he describes his situation thus:

"Yesterday I counted on sitting down and writing you a long account of myself and all around me; I reckoned, however, without my host—the governor. This is the severest prison in England, and the poor devils in it are treated more like convicts than debtors. The first thing that happened was that we were all turned out of our room, and locked up in another, and then taken to church, where we were locked in. . . .

"After church, till evening service, nothing allowed to be done but walking up and down or sitting quiet; no writing permitted, no visitors allowed within the walls, no letters to be received or despatched.

"Did you ever hear of such absurd and tyrannical regulations? Literally, with the exception of not having handcuffs and fetters on, we are treated like felons."

going on; while the abortive attempts to be jolly of those who in truth had nothing but sorrow in them, were too transparent not to be seen through; and the noise and racket of those vagabonds who had neither feeling for themselves nor for others jarred fearfully on the ears of those who had serious cause for grief and reflection. I had never mixed with blackguards before; and though I thought I had a pretty good notion of what they were capable, I had not yet conceived such disgusting revelry. Most of these men were only there for the purpose of swindling their creditors, looked upon a prison life as a lark, and almost regretted the moment of their liberation.

In such company as this were some officers in her Majesty's service and one or two clergymen of the Church of England, whose scanty stipends had not been able to keep them out of debt—among the former one poor young captain who had just returned from the Crimea, and had been arrested on setting his foot on his native shore, after fighting his country's battles. And I do say it is monstrous that such things should exist; and if I have dwelt so long on these details it has not been with the idea of setting myself up as a martyr, but in the hope that I may interest someone to examine into the matter and bring about a reform, so that, for the sake of more deserving persons than myself, such revolting severity may be abolished.

As no bail could be permitted, I was doomed for a

whole month to this degrading sojourn.* At length the day of probation arrived, and in a solitary stone cell, seated on a small wooden bench, I awaited my fate.

* Strenuous efforts had been made to obtain bail, but without effect. A letter of July 4th says: "The application for bail will next be made, notice of which is to be given to-morrow. Pray heaven we may get that agreed to, and then I shall get away at once till the 1st of August. The judge has the character of being a very kind and good-natured man, and I hope I may rely on what the solicitor here assures me, that I shall get my discharge without difficulty. He has a great objection to giving anyone the privilege of going out upon bail, because he holds a court every fortnight, and therefore prisoners are kept in the Castle more than half the time they are in other courts. My application, however, being made on grounds widely different from the usual ones, is considered as likely to be granted, inasmuch as I have to show that by remaining in I not only lose a considerable sum from breaking my engagements already entered into, and which cannot be rescinded, but also that I am running the risk of incurring fresh liabilities by the non-performance of my contracts, the managers having it in their power to sue me for damages for my breach of contract. If the judge here refuses, it is believed that the superior court in London can, upon representation of the facts, grant an order to compel him. Let us hope for the best." Later in the same letter Mathews requests his wife to direct her letters "to me at once at Hansbrow's Hotel. This is the recognised name for Lancaster Castle at the Post-office, and, I find, generally adopted by the inmates, Captain Hansbrow being the name of the governor."

Two days afterwards he refers again to this address. "It is a slang sort of address after all, and but for this advantage I mention" —letters in some way reached him more quickly if directed thus—"I should not allow you to use it." This letter concluded in the following words:

"I am in a great state of suspense about the success of our appli-

From this cell a narrow staircase, little more than a ladder, led up through a trapdoor to the court. "Why," said I to the turnkey who attended me, "this is like going to execution!" "Ah!" said he, "many a poor fellow has gone up that trap to be hanged. This used to be the criminal side of the Castle." This was the *coup de grâce.*

As soon as I was dismissed from the final ordeal, I was cut down and delivered into the hands of my friends. Away I flew to the railway, and jumped into a train which was just starting. And lucky it was that I was so prompt, for an honour was in store for me that I little dreamt of; as I learnt afterwards that my liberation was to have been marked with public recognition, and that a band of music had been engaged to convey me to the station in triumph. I was grateful to have escaped the elevation to such bad eminence. As we rattled by the Castle walls, a rosy, smiling gentleman opposite me playfully observed: "That's where Charley Mathews is confined." "Really!" said a sympathising female; "poor fellow!" "Poor fellow!" said the jolly

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cation for bail, and shall know no rest till it is decided. Pray Heaven it may succeed. Keep up your spirits, dearest love, and hope for the best. This has been an awful trial to us both, but better days are in store.

"God bless and protect you, beloved Lizzy, and grant that we may at last know what it is to be free. A thousand kisses from your ever affectionate husband,

"C. J. MATHEWS."

gentleman, with a gingerbread-nut in his mouth; "not at all. He revels in it. Lord bless you, he has been in every prison in England!" I need not say I did not immediately introduce myself.

To the congratulations of my friends on my freedom I could find nothing cheerful to reply.* Freedom was impossible for *me*. The phantom "Debt" was still grinning in derision before me, and unfolding an endless array of future trouble. Even all the punishment I had

* On July 18th, Mrs. Mathews, senior, remembering the fatal mistake that was made after the previous bankruptcy, wrote:

"With reference to the advice offered to you in my yesterday's letter, as to the propriety of waiving all distinction between one creditor and another, I hope I may further impress this proceeding without any imputation of prompting that which is unjust to any. The whole proceeding when we are compelled to disadvantage our 'neighbour' is a wrong; but as the law gives sanction when no other remedy appears for a man to regain freedom, and with that freedom, the *will and means of becoming just for the time to come in his dealings*, he has no right to favour one creditor to the exclusion of benefit to another, possibly with equal right to be considered. Besides this, if you remain a bondsman, your exertions will be cramped, and your spirits depressed. Well has it been said that

To live by one man's will becomes all men's misery.

"If you have determined to gain freedom in the eyes of the world, be *really* free, or again you will have to account to the misled world for another failure. All that any just person should require you to do under your present state is to endeavour, by *caution and moderation in your future expenditure*, to save something to give over to your creditors, without partiality or prejudice. . . . If I vex you, forgive your well-meaning and affectionate mother,

"ANNE MATHEWS."

undergone could not make me free, though it was supposed to do so. It was one of the world's fallacies. I was still open to the claims of collateral securities and government attachments, and at the very moment I left Lancaster, congratulated as a free man and emancipated from all my debts, I actually owed upwards of £2,000.

My wife only survived a few days after my return,* and with a heavy heart I resumed my profession, and for a twelvemonth worked unremittingly to discharge my remaining liabilities. Another trip to America was now proposed, and for the hundredth time I thought a fortune awaited me.† The brilliant opening at New York augured well, but ere a couple of months had elapsed a money crisis again arrived, which ruined half the country and again destroyed my hopes.‡ It was useless. I began to despair of ever amassing money, and I gave it up as a bad job, returning after a year's absence, as usual without bringing back with me the treasure I expected. However, a treasure I did bring with me,

* "Madame Vestris" died at Gore Lodge, Fulham, on August 8th, 1856.

† *The Times* of August 21st, 1857, took leave of Mathews in the following unusually warm manner: "He now stands acknowledged as an actor altogether unrivalled in what is called 'eccentric' comedy. . . . To the Americans he will be a 'star,' not only of the first magnitude, but of a kind that has not yet shone on the western world."

‡ See Appendix A, page 290.

more valuable than any I counted on—a prudent, economical, industrious little helpmate,* who, by two or

* Mathews was married to Mrs. Davenport in New York, on the 14th February, 1858, and announced the change in his condition to his mother in the following letter:

"Baltimore, Feb. 28, 1858.

"MY DEAREST MOTHER,

"The engagement at Burton's terminated most brilliantly, completing sixty nights' performance, the longest star engagement ever known in New York. I never went through harder work—rehearsing every day except one, and constantly studying and recovering parts; for, besides my own *répertoire*, I have played lots of new parts in old pieces, and some original ones written expressly for me. It has been satisfactory in every way, and I have every reason to be satisfied and gratified with the result.

"Last night completed my first week here, and a most triumphant one it has been in every way. A most enthusiastic jolly audience, a nice small theatre—better adapted to my pieces than any I have yet played in in America—and a very fair company. The charge to the jury in 'Patter v. Clatter' encored every night, 'Jenny Jones' ditto; 'He would be an Actor' and the 'Dowager' the favourite pieces. They have not had such houses, they say, for years; prices raised, &c. &c. Next week I play the 'Gun Trick,' which was a great hit in New York; the following fortnight go to Washington, and the fortnight after to Richmond; address, however, as usual, 'P. O., New York,' and the letters will be forwarded faithfully.

"And now, my dearest mother, I have to announce to you an event that will surprise you, whether agreeably or not I cannot yet tell. On Tuesday week last I again took unto myself a WIFE! A charming woman, and I trust one that you will like. She is a delightful actress and a great favourite. You will see by the bill I send you that she is playing here with me, and is in every way attractive. I know this news will cause you many conflicting thoughts,

three years of good management, repaired the cruelty of fortune in other respects, and who, with a clear little head and a good little heart, at length did for me what I had never been able to do for myself—kept my expenditure within my income.

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but I have no fear of your ultimately approving my choice and wishing me joy.

"I will say no more on the subject at present, as the fact will be enough for you to digest at present.

"I hope my weekly letters have kept your mind more at ease than heretofore. One hiatus will have occurred, for really last week I was too much driven for time to write, but I will endeavour not to let another week go by without a line or two.

"God bless you, my dearest mother.

"Ever your affectionate Son,

"C. J. MATHEWS."

CHAPTER IV.

LETTERS FROM LANCASTER CASTLE.

"Lancaster, July 5, 1856.

"My own dearest Love,

"In spite of all my hard struggles, I have the sad task to announce to you that I have been arrested and brought here. For God's sake, do not let the news overwhelm you! I know no other mode of acquainting you with it, and think a long beginning is almost worse than the truth at once. Let me at once detail to you the facts, which I was not allowed either the time or means of doing last night.

"After a very long rehearsal, at Preston, of 'Married for Money' and 'Aggravating Sam,' I got to the hotel to a hasty dinner. Turner had not arrived, for I was obliged to leave him behind to try and obtain the balance of the money due from Rochdale. I had just written the enclosed letter, and was waiting for the arrival of the money, when a man entered my room and asked the too well-known question of 'Are you Mr. Mathews?' I felt as if I should faint, as I answered

in the affirmative. In that moment of time all the horrors that had to follow presented themselves before me. 'I am sorry to say, sir, that I am here to arrest you, at the suit of Seale and Co., for between £400 and £500.' My fate was clear. In spite of every entreaty of mine that he would allow me to act that night, he was inexorable. There was nothing left for it but to start off there and then to Lancaster Castle, twenty miles off. I leave you to conceive the agony of my despair. But one thought rushed upon me—the thought of you, my poor suffering, beloved wife. How were you to be informed of it, and what would be the effect it would have on you? I shall never forget that moment! All I have gone through for the last twenty years was nothing to the supreme anguish of that moment. Just as I was starting, Turner fortunately arrived, having obtained all the money (but £10) from Rochdale. But for this piece of good fortune I should have been here *without a penny*, and should have been lodged among the *paupers* of the place. My twenty-mile journey was something dreadful; I cannot describe it. I was obliged to confide to Turner the task of announcing the event to Mr. Egan, the manager. What he did after that I have no means yet of ascertaining. Turner was to come on by the train to Lancaster, and bring me some things; the train was not to leave till half-past nine. Had he not arrived as he did, I should have been without a thing of any sort. In a pouring rain we arrived here,

and my heart died within me as I entered the gloomy portals, and heard all the dreadful paraphernalia of iron doors and bolts. I had never before been within a real *bonâ fide* prison in all its horrors. I will not describe them, my beloved one; I do not wish to add to your misery. Suffice it to say that my *degradation* was *complete*. A disgusting pallet in a *stone* room, with twenty-one other prisoners! I need say no more. When Turner arrived they would not let him communicate with me, or convey either clothes or letters to me. It was beyond the hour, and nothing could be done till this morning. . . .

"I have telegraphed to Knowles (who has returned to Scarborough) and to Smith, also to Manchester to Knowles's lawyer, and am writing in every direction and to everybody I can think of. I am totally helpless, and in the depths of despair till I know what my fate is to be. Oh what a day I shall pass to-morrow, instead of passing it in my own beloved home! When I think of your state of mind and body, I dread to hear of the consequences. I will not attempt to preach quiet and calmness—the position is beyond all that; and I cannot expect from you, in your sad state, that which I cannot command myself.

"Turner will be here directly, so I must conclude. Pray send him back to me as soon as possible, as he is the only means I have of communicating with the outer world. It is almost hopeless to get any assistance from

anyone *to-day*, and to-morrow being Sunday, no business can be transacted, so till Monday I must lie here in the most abject state. I have escaped, all my life, contact with *canaille*, and now, for the first time, have to swallow the bitterest pill that humanity can be cursed with—the society of twenty-one coarse companions, without the power of a moment's solitude or retirement, and without the means of communication with a living soul but themselves till Monday. No post even to London to-day. My sins must be great to suffer this punishment; I shall *never* get over it.

"God bless and protect you, my own beloved, adored wife. . . . Forgive me the misery I cause you; I am sufficiently punished.

"Your ever affectionate, miserable Husband,

"C. J. MATHEWS.

"God help me! A thousand, thousand kisses!"

"Lancaster, July 8th, 1856.

"MY OWN DEAREST LOVE,

"There never was any man in such a complication of miseries. Oh dearest love! what agony I have suffered, and what fresh agony I have to endure. It is of no use struggling against my fate any longer, and truth must be told. Detainers have come down, and there is nothing left for it but to free myself from the toils. They are indeed vultures, as you call them;

and they have increased from day to day and month to month, till the involvement is beyond all human power to extricate me from but the course I have been making such sacrifices to avoid. For you, and you alone, my beloved Lizzy, have I for so long been battling. I would have shaken off the hornets a twelvemonth ago, but I know the horror you have of such a step, and with reason. I would have worked for the rest of my life with cheerfulness to save you this new shock; but my persecutors are too many for me, and I am unable to stand against them. I had heard that detainers were expected, and yesterday evening they were lodged. Getting out being now a matter of impossibility, I immediately put myself in the hands of Mr. Swan—who telegraphed to George Lewis, as not a moment was to be lost—or the time for filing my petition would be lost, and I should not be able to get bail, and should be obliged to remain here till the hearing. This is a sad disaster, but inevitable. *Twenty years* would not have worked me through the deep involvement. More than a hundred ravenous creditors, all tearing me to pieces and doubling their debts every year by law expenses and interest. My health was beginning to suffer; and I will now confess to you that I have been seriously ill two or three times lately, and fearful that I should break down altogether. Think what a frightful thing that would have been. Without a penny to bless myself with, on a sick-bed away from you, and ruin to

us all in its worst shape—even worse than this, which is intolerable. The moment I heard my fate, and as soon as I had recovered the first shock, I telegraphed to Manchester for Chambers, who started instantly and was with me, by Knowles's order, at one o'clock. I told him all the circumstances; and he told me, in reply, that Knowles intended and would have come himself, but was prevented from leaving Manchester till to-morrow; but that he had empowered him to say that from what he heard here yesterday, he was convinced that this would be the end of it when he heard of the detainers; that he thought it was the very best thing that could have happened to me, though it would be a loss of so much money to himself from the breach of my engagements at Preston, Hull, Doncaster, York, Leeds, Wakefield, &c. &c. I send you his note and also Richard's letter, which he sent me back. Knowles would have sent the guarantee required in a moment, but was convinced that the moment it was known (and everything is instantly known) that all the others would follow suit, and we should only be where we were. This was so self-evident, that I could not but admit it. The papers will go to Lewis by to-night's post, and a few days will, I hope, liberate me till the hearing. . . . When I tell you that I have little doubt that my debts and liabilities will amount to something like £8,000, I leave you to imagine what I have had on my mind for the last twelvemonth. Nothing could have saved me, and

my *life* must have gone in the useless and vain attempt to patch up all these overwhelming matters.

"Let me entreat of you, my own dearest Lizzy, to look at this as a blessing instead of a curse. It is the only chance of peace and quiet ever being restored to us. I know the horrid blow it will be to you at first; but when you come to hear and see all the particulars, you will, I am convinced, say yourself it was not a thing to delay a moment. At first I determined to apply for a *habeas corpus* to bring me up to the Queen's Bench; but how should I be any better there? The delay would be ruinous, and the expense equally so—and to gain what? I should be no nearer in fact than here, with much more publicity in every way, and with many advantages lost. I should have to go through all the disgusting ceremony of entering a new prison and going among fresh blackguards—London blackguards instead of Lancashire boors and merchants, who, at all events, are not people who know me. Then the court here is much easier to prepare for and go through than the London one—small and among strangers. My creditors also are not so likely to come all the way to oppose me, or even to witness my examination. The judge, they say, is a kind one, and, in short, everything is in favour of Lancaster. As to the horrors of this place, they are immaterial when once one has made up one's mind; and, at all events, the worst is over. I should have lost a week at least in getting a *habeas corpus*,

and in a week I am assured I shall be out on bail. It could not be got, as Knowles believed, upon simply applying for it. *Notice* must be given *six days* previous. That notice is given, and, with God's help and assistance, I shall be liberated till the hearing, as soon as it is accepted. Knowles also, I think very kindly, sent me word that he would not even attempt to ask me to act anywhere between my liberation and the hearing, which is a real comfort.

"Now pray, dearest, try and look the horrible truth in the face. Send me a list of every little debt of *yours*, however small—even to £1, that I may leave nothing unprepared for, and let us once more sit quietly down free from all such cares for the future. We have now no Lyceum to drag us down again, and in a short time all will be well. . . .

"God bless and give you strength to support this present misfortune, and preserve you to enjoy the happiness that I trust will follow. A thousand thousand kisses, my own dearly beloved wife. I have your dear picture before my eyes all day. It has been a real comfort to me, and I speak to it and kiss it every night.

"Once more, God bless you.

"Your affectionate Husband,

"C. J. MATHEWS."

"Lancaster, July 9, 1856.

"My own dearest Love,

". . . . As to the coming here, I can only say it is *madness*. If we could meet, or be together in private even for an hour, it would be different; though to bring you away from your room in your state, and without the power to have the slightest comfort in this beastly town, and away from your doctor, would be to urge you to your complete prostration, and bring you to your grave at once. But to see you in a stone room, in the presence of a horrid turnkey, without the means of even giving you a seat after a walk of many hundred yards through paved courts and stone staircases, in the midst of prisoners and convicts, would be actually *making* misery of so dreadful a nature as not to be borne for a moment, even in contemplation. You would never arrive to the frightful reality—you would sink in the attempt. For mercy's sake, let me implore—let me entreat and conjure you to dismiss such an idea from your mind! Think what it would be!

"I trust my letter of yesterday, after the first shock is over, will have the effect of tranquillising your mind, and inducing you to look forward to a closely-approaching future of quiet and happy release from the miseries of debt and distress. It is a bitter pill to swallow, but the medicine will purify the system and cure you of the worst of all your maladies—*a tortured mind*. Whenever your mind is at ease you are always better; when you

are worried, your sufferings are always increased. When all these torturing causes of worry and anxiety are removed your health will improve at once; and you know there is no chance of those causes returning, since all speculation is over, and we have nothing to do but to calculate our means and live within them. *Do, pray* do, dearest beloved Lizzy, listen to me, and try to bear up! Think what agony it is to me to know you are in such an awful state as that Mrs. Morrisson describes. It is truly heartrending, and my feelings are not to be described. I am positively annihilated. Poor Mrs. Morrisson, whose kindness has hitherto sustained you so much, is also ill and obliged to leave you. What a combination of ills! And yet nothing to what you would suffer, alone, and without a doctor, to embark on a journey of two hundred and thirty miles—you who have not moved from your chair for nearly two years! I tremble to think of it! . . . God bless you!

"Your affectionate Husband,

"C. J. MATHEWS."

"Lancaster, July 17, 1856.

"MY OWN DEAREST LOVE,

"I don't know what Smith can have said to make you uncomfortable; he promised me, on the contrary, that he would do all in his power to comfort and console you. I have not, and never had, the slightest intention of playing at Preston before I come

home—never dreamt of such a thing. But I have promised faithfully to consult Lewis on all points, and I will keep my word. As to the question of *bail*, it is one that neither Smith nor anyone else can decide till the application comes to be heard; and I have never deceived you about it for a moment. I have told you, from day to day, all I heard myself, and can now only repeat what my solicitor here tells me. If the thing were impossible, he would not take all the trouble he is taking about it. He thinks I have a claim, and that there is every probability of its being admitted; at all events, the hope has buoyed me up ever since I have been here, and I do not mean to abandon it till the thing has been tried. The sort of cases they meet with here are very different from mine, and you must remember how many times in the course of my troubles even George Lewis has been wrong. I could not take the 'Debtor and Creditor Arrangement,' I could not be made a bankrupt, &c., and yet I succeeded in both matters. Hope for the best, dearest Lizzy. If it be not granted we cannot help it, and must submit to fate; but let us make the attempt before we despair.

"I have received the butter, and have enjoyed it much. The seltzer and potass is to be applied for *when wanted*, till when no decision will be come to; it will depend upon the doctor. The wine I have succeeded in obtaining in this way: Two gentlemen have to club with me, and give up their beer for one day, so that a

bottle of wine may come in for the *three* in lieu of beer; I then give them my two days' beer in return, and so get the wine without their sharing it. It will last me the three days, and then the farce has to be repeated. Did you ever hear of such stuff? It is the first time such a thing has been granted, even in this ridiculous way, as no beer or anything else is admitted but when furnished by the privileged person, and all are compelled to swallow what he sends, or go without. The tea I have not arranged at all, as the gigantic teapot is common to the whole room, and I could not have it separate from the rest. The whole arrangements are as if for convicts more than debtors, and we are watched by turnkeys appointed for the purpose, who visit us every half-hour; by the governor, who inspects us once a day; by the chaplain and the doctor, each once a day. Visitors who come to see anyone are locked into a small stone room, with an iron door to it, having a small square window to the lobby, at which the turnkey stands and keeps guard, that he may observe what passes within, and see that no spirits or tobacco are conveyed to the prisoner, *nothing* being allowed to be brought in at visiting hours. All linen and stores must be brought at eight o'clock in the morning, at which hour the market people come to the iron grating, beyond which no one is allowed to pass, and through which everything is handed. If anyone comes to speak to a prisoner at that hour, he is obliged to bring an egg or a potato in his hand, or he is not

allowed to pass the outer gate. Half an hour only is allowed for this ceremony; in short, the whole thing is disgusting and unnecessary. We are unlocked at six in the morning, let out of our stone bedrooms, and ushered into the great room in which we live, on one side of which is the huge fire, at which all the meals are cooked, and on the other a large sink, at which everyone has to wash, rubbing the water into their faces with their hands, and drying them on the general jack-towel. As soon as the bedrooms are cleared they are locked again, and no one is allowed to enter them again until they are unlocked at half-past nine at night, at which time all are sent to bed. As soon as my towels arrived, and I was able to talk over the turnkey, I contrived to get a basin in the bedroom, and so have avoided the horrid washing exhibition of the first two or three mornings. The servants (five in number) are called 'Bettys,' and are also debtors; they wash and dine in the same room as ourselves. I can assure you it is as disgusting a scene as can be imagined altogether. To-morrow is the court-day, and the expression on every face is that of anxiety and apprehension. There are about nine from our room who expect to be discharged, and I heartily hope they will, as it will diminish our numbers. On Saturday morning my application for bail will be heard, and if I *should* be successful—but I will not be too sanguine—I should jump out of my skin for joy. . . .

"And now good-bye, my own dearly-beloved wife.

Keep up your spirits, and trust in Providence. God bless and protect you, my own darling wife, is the constant prayer of your fondly-affectionate husband,

"C. J. MATHEWS."

"Lancaster, July 19, 1856.

"MY OWN DEAREST-BELOVED WIFE,

"Your reminder of our wedding-day brought the tears into my eyes; for though I may be inattentive to such anniversaries generally, my heart must be made of stone not to call to mind and contrast the happiness experienced on that blessed day and the misery endured yesterday. Believe me, my darling Lizzy, when I swear that my love for you is as true at this moment as it was eighteen years ago, and that your sufferings and your fortitude under all the ills of this world endear you more to me every hour. All this I hoped to have been able to say to you instead of write, but after spending a day of expectation and hope, I have been cruelly disappointed. At ten o'clock this morning the court sat, and I was assured that the fifteen cases to be heard, being all adjourned cases, would not take an hour to dispose of; instead of which they did not terminate till past three o'clock. All this time I was locked in a small room adjoining the court, with the poor devils who were waiting to be called up—a low arched stone room, very dark and damp, and elegantly termed and gravely spoken of as 'the sweating-room.' At last, the cases

being all concluded, my counsel made the application, and I expected to hear my name called out; but, to my unspeakable disappointment, I remained there for about a quarter of an hour more in solitary confinement, and was at last informed that the judge had heard the application made and the grounds on which it was founded, and that, being shaken from his usual course of immediate refusal, had postponed his decision till Monday, that he might take the papers with him to Preston, in order to consult with the sheriff of Lancaster, who is his brother, and resides in the same house. At this announcement I felt all hope was at an end, but my counsel and solicitor will not view it in that light; they argue that, if he had not seen some good cause for deviating from his invariable rule, he would not have even listened to our arguments, and that the circumstance of his taking the papers home was all in our favour, as it looked as if he were likely to grant our petition. I hope it may turn out so, but I own I am quite dispirited about it, and had so set my heart upon getting home by to-night's train, that I cannot philosophise about it at all. The mere preparation of the bail papers and affidavits, notices, &c. &c., will have cost between thirty and forty pounds, and to fail after all is dreadful. Two days more of suspense and doubt, too, before his decision can arrive—it will be an age of torment, and if adverse—another whole fortnight shall I have to pass in this detested abode. Oh! how I envied

the happy fellows who left us to-day, among whom I had flattered myself I should have been. Five of them were discharged, and with joy in their hearts hurried away to embrace their wives and families. My heart sunk as I saw them depart, and I could not repress the tears that flowed at the bitter disappointment I had endured. I never required so much courage to bear up against the buffetings of fate as on this occasion. I could almost have wished that the bail had been refused at once, than to be kept in the restless agony I am in for forty-eight hours more. I have now no hope, and have made up my mind that I shall have to rot here the whole of the time. All has been done that could be done, and I must submit, but the blow is almost too much to bear.

"You will get this on Monday morning, for though there is no delivery in London to-morrow, the post goes to-night; consequently I avoid the annoyance of not being able to write to-morrow. On Monday I will send you a telegraph to announce the judge's decision, and, if favourable, shall follow it myself by the first train that starts. If it is unfavourable and my misery is confirmed, you must call all your courage to your aid, and I will do all I can to resign myself with patience to my fresh load of wretchedness. It is an age to look forward to, and I cannot look it in the face at all. It is beyond all I had ever contemplated, and is surely punishment for all my sins in this world. No poor wretch guilty of felony

was ever treated more harshly than I have been, and all for the crime of trying to pay a set of sharks, who have only themselves to thank for the losses they will sustain. I am indeed fallen low this time, and am unable to contend with the despair I feel. I am quite broken down and broken hearted. This long separation has already unmanned me, and if I have still to remain here I am sure my spirits and fortitude *must* give way.

"God bless and protect you, my own beloved, adored wife, and give you strength and courage to support our dreadful calamities better than I am able to do, and grant that we may soon meet to part no more, but live to comfort each other for the future in peace and tranquillity.

"Believe me ever, my beloved wife, in weal and in woe,

"Your truly affectionate Husband,

"C. J. MATHEWS."

"Lancaster, July 21, 1856.

"MY OWN DEAREST LOVE,

"With a heavy heart, I sit down to announce the failure of my application for bail, and the melancholy fact that here I am for another ten days. All our trouble, anxiety, and expense has ended in this. I must calmly sit down and count the days and hours of my imprisonment, and pray fervently that at least the

termination of my sufferings may then be brought about. How I am to endure it I do not know; at present I am so completely prostrated by the great disappointment that I can hardly appreciate my situation. I feel positively stunned by the blow, for, in spite of all my misgivings to the contrary, I find that I had firmly calculated on my liberation. I try to turn my thoughts to the good sides of the question, but have difficulty in keeping them in that direction; however, such as they are, I will set them forth, in the hope that you may endeavour to draw some consolation from them. It appears, then, that my counsel, Mr. McCoubray, a very kind and gentlemanlike man, actually delayed his departure, in order himself to receive the decision of the judge at Preston, so that, in case of his granting our application, no time should be lost in perfecting the papers at once, and obtaining my release the same day. He saw the judge, and received his answer from his own lips. He stated that, after due reflection, he found it impossible to deviate from his invariable rule, even under such pressing and peculiar circumstances, as it would at once open the door to a precedent which would entail constant interference with the plan laid down by the court, and be referred to by everyone in future, as in almost every case there was some feature of great hardship which would admit of discussion and argument, and therefore he most reluctantly refused to entertain the plea; at the same time, he desired Mr. McCoubray to

inform me, not in his public capacity, but as my well-wisher in the matter, that I should be no loser in the end by this apparent harshness, for, in giving judgment, he always took into consideration the length of time that had elapsed since the first incarceration of an insolvent debtor, and the consequent length of punishment he had endured, and looked with more leniency upon a man who had been hostilely imprisoned, and retained within the walls without bail, than upon one who had been arrested on what is called a friendly detainer, and who had been at liberty till the last moment. He added that he was quite convinced that my case was one of even unusual hostility and hardship, from the circumstances under which I had been lodged here, and that he had every wish to do all in his power to help me and restore me to liberty. This was certainly somewhat cheering, but I fear my manner of receiving it was not quite so gracious as it ought to have been, for I could not in a moment get over the bitter disappointment I experienced at his refusal. This bad news did not reach me till half-past four, and I at once sent you off the telegraphic message. I returned to the hateful room we live in like a man who had received a sentence of immediate execution, and everyone at once saw the misery which I had not even the strength to disguise. It was one of the most wretched moments of my life. Fortunately we have lost the most noisy and objectionable members of our community, and have three or four gentlemen in

their stead. Two of them are clergymen, and one a captain in the army, just returned from foreign service, who, poor fellow, was arrested in his ship before landing. He is a very amiable, quiet young man, and as melancholy as myself. This, of course, renders my situation a little less irksome, as the disgusting jollity, the singing, the practical joking, and the grating familiarity of the coarse brutes I found here at first has disappeared, and the place is quiet, and the inhabitants unobtrusive. Our numbers are also lessened, which is an improvement, having now only seventeen in the room. But ten days more! What an age it seems!—how *shall* I support it? The news, too, of your return of illness was an addition to my sufferings; no letter to cheer me, and the fear, from not having one even of dictation, that you were seriously ill again. Jenny's telegraph to-day, thank God, relieved me a little, and the promised letter of to-night will, I hope, contain fresh assurance that you are better. This bad news, I fear, will again prey upon your poor heart, and cause a return of your pains; and I have nothing to say more to comfort you under this accumulation of misfortunes. It is a total wreck of all our happiness, and we can only look to Providence to save and restore us again.

"I have no other subject to write upon to-day, for I cannot collect my thoughts, or turn them from the one subject of grief.

"God bless you, dearest love. I dare not tell you to

keep up your spirits—it is a mockery to say such things under such circumstances; and I know from my own feelings what yours must be. I am in the depths of despair and melancholy, and know not what to do.

"Give my love to all friends, and believe me, my dear, dear, beloved wife, your wretched, disconsolate, but ever tenderly-attached husband,

"C. J. MATHEWS."

"Lancaster, July 22nd, 1856.

"MY OWN DEAREST LOVE,

"I was sadly grieved at the receipt of Mrs. Morrisson's letter of this morning, announcing your continued illness. I was afraid to open it, for I anticipated its contents. I had a weary sleepless night, and was up an hour before the arrival of the post, in anticipation of the hoped-for long letter which Jenny's telegraph half-promised me; and the sight of Mrs. Morrisson's hand was death to my expectations. Dearest Lizzy, I cannot tell you what I feel at hearing such a miserable account of you, and fear that my yesterday's letter will be calculated to increase your sufferings rather than diminish them. Would that I had had some words of comfort to convey to you, but I had nothing but bad news to send and no ray of hope to alleviate it. To-day has been a perfect blank, and I have for the first time in my life become a deck-walker. I have paced up and

down till my legs would no longer allow it, and have been unable to read or occupy myself in any way. What a weary life I have to lead for the next ten days! The weather too has set in fine, and the races are on in Lancaster, the bells all ringing, and the sun shining in through the iron bars of the Castle, and even penetrating the double panes of ground glass which form the windows; for we cannot even see the sky above us, or distinguish any object without. A large sheet of iron is fixed to the lower part of the window, so that we cannot look down even into the castle-yard, and the double panes of clouded glass prevent our looking up. You cannot conceive the melancholy inspired by this contrivance. Our thoughts are thus forced inwards, and even the sight of a distant hill is denied us. The yard in which we are allowed to walk is a very small one, and surrounded by the high masses of building forming the castle-keep and the various rooms of the prisoners, and is constantly filled with the debtors from the second-class rooms, who play ball and skittles, and sing and shout, and render it impossible to remain there, even to feel an occasional breath of air. The room we live in is fortunately very large and immensely high, with many windows in it, which makes it tolerably airy; for the double windows are made in long alternate slips, about two inches apart, so that, though they cannot be seen through, they allow the air to pass freely all day. But I will not continue describing the details of my dungeon, but leave it till

the happy time when I can speak of them as of things gone by for ever.

"I have nothing more to say to-day, dearest. My life is a blank, and not a soul have I seen, not a letter have I received since early morning. I am worn out in spirit, and will not afflict you with any more of my croaking; it is only adding to your discomfort.

"God bless and preserve you, my dearest-beloved wife, is the constant prayer of

"Your affectionate, wretched Husband,

"C. J. MATHEWS."

"Lancaster, July 24th, 1856.

"MY OWN DEAREST-BELOVED LIZZY,

"I trust and hope that my letter of yesterday proved a letter more comforting to you than those of the previous day, and that my promise of bearing up under my misfortunes was more cheerful than my previous complaints and lamentations. I have done my best to-day, and read, and walked, and tried to occupy my mind as much as possible, and keep off evil thoughts. I am much more resigned, and have got my bed-room made more comfortable. The beds have been altered in position, and I have prevailed on the people to let me have a wash-hand basin and towels in the room, which have been a great boon. Instead of having to wash my face at the common sink, and shave in the

midst of the crowd, I can now, at all events, strip and wash in retirement. The general room, too, is purified by the absence of the most objectionable members, and is much more quiet and orderly. The fencing, boxing, and music have ceased; and, I think, all are thankful for the relief. The ridiculous attempts to be jolly of those who, in truth, had nothing but sorrow in their hearts, were too transparent not to be seen through; while the noise and racket of those vagabonds, who had neither feeling for themselves nor others, jarred dreadfully on the ears of those who had serious causes for reflection and grief. For my own part, I can truly say I was driven to madness by them. I had never mixed with blackguards before; and though I had, I thought, a pretty good notion of what they were capable, I had not yet conceived the disgusting revelry of men who were here only for the purpose of swindling their creditors, and looked upon the prison life as a lark, and almost regretted the moment of their liberation.

"To-day, for the first time, I encountered the governor, who stopped me on the stairs and introduced himself to me. After shaking hands he kept me in conversation for some time, and expressed his regret that he was compelled to carry out the stringent regulations of the jail, and had no means of departing from them on any occasion. In proof of this he told me that some time back a near relation of his own had unhappily been placed within the walls, and that even

in his case he dared not relax in any one particular from the accustomed severity. He spoke strongly of what he thought the ill-judged and unnecessary harshness of the judge in not allowing me to go out on bail, and assured me that any request of mine that was within his power he would, with pleasure, attend to. I mentioned at once the horrible double windows of ground glass, and, on the score of *ventilation*, urged their removal. He said he had objected strongly, in the first instance, to their adoption, and would lay my complaint at once before the magistrates, backed by his own opinion, and, if possible, obtain their removal. He said he knew my father, and regretted that he should have to make my acquaintance under such circumstances. I hope, with all my heart, that I may not be here to profit by the alteration; but, at all events, I shall have added to the comfort of the poor devils I leave behind me.

"I have little more to say, dearest, but to repeat, for the hundredth time, my uneasiness about yourself, though I would not for a moment urge your exerting yourself to sit up or write while quiet and perfect repose are so necessary to you; and however gratifying it would be to me to see your beloved hand again, I would not purchase that pleasure at so dear a rate as that of disturbing your repose. Heaven grant that the worst is now over, and that you will have no further news to agitate you, and that the next official announce-

ment I may have to make to you may be that I am on my way to dear home. Cheer up, darling, and be at peace as far as your melancholy state of health will permit, and let the anticipation of our joyful meeting buoy you up as it does me.

"Believe me, my own dearly-beloved wife,

"Your truly affectionate Husband,

"C. J. MATHEWS."

"Lancaster, July 28, 1856.

"MY OWN DEAREST LOVE,

"Thanks for your few lines of yesterday. It cheered me very much to hear that you were able to sit up so long, and hope that you have not felt the worse for it. This morning was a blank, but to-morrow I shall look out for my ray of sun on getting up. My morning letter is the one thing I have to look forward to, and it lasts me the day.

"Three days more, and then the morning will dawn on which hangs my fate. Oh how I long for it! I have written a statement of the points most required to George Lewis, and to-morrow shall hear whether he will come down himself or not. To-morrow, also, I am to have an interview with my counsel, and go over the schedule in detail, to give them explanations of all that they may feel necessary to be made acquainted with. My name is first on the list for Friday, and I hope will come on first; though I am told that the cases are not

always taken in the order that they are put down, but are regulated according to the convenience of the judge and the counsel. Still, as mine is a heavier matter than many that are heard here, the probability is in favour of their commencing with it. It will be a great boon to me if they do; as they tell me the room in which all the people wait who are going up to the court, and which I have already mentioned as bearing the charming name of the 'sweating room,' is a most horrible spot—damp, dark, and without ventilation, and that twenty or thirty are crammed into it, while it is scarcely able to contain half the number. . . .

"I am now all alive again, and patiently waiting for Friday. I got in my painting-box to-day, which I regret I did not think of before, and occupied myself with making a sketch of our *banqueting hall.* It passed the time very well, though I cannot say the subject is a very interesting one. I also got a chess-board, and that has kept my mind a little away from my own affairs. In short, I have kept my word in determining not to let myself down by brooding over my melancholy position; besides, I am now kept up by hope again, having only a day or two to wait. To-morrow I shall be occupied, I expect, for some hours in consultation, and on Wednesday shall have fresh briefs to make out, embodying the various matters which will require enlightenment to-morrow; and on Thursday—oh, on Thursday!—I don't know what I shall do. It will be a

blank day of fidget and anxiety. Never mind, I shall have the occupation of counting the *hours*.

"God bless you, my darling wife, and grant that I may send you good news by telegraph on Friday afternoon, and follow it up by my own arrival on Saturday evening. Love to all.

"Ever your affectionate Husband,

"C. J. MATHEWS."

TELEGRAM FROM CHARLES J. MATHEWS, LANCASTER, TO MRS. MATHEWS.

"August 1st, 1856.

"Discharged to-day; shall be home on Monday. God bless you."

"August 1st, 1856.

"MY OWN DEAREST LOVE,

"No need to write a long letter to-day. My telegraph told you all that was necessary. I was not a quarter of an hour in the court, and not a disagreeable thing said. Indeed, no word would have been spoken had it not been for Mr. Harbin, who attended for Allcroft, and proposed that I should put aside something out of my future earnings. The judge put him down at once, and said that the object of this court was not to saddle a man's future exertions, but to set him free from his difficulties. There was no work for Lewis; in short, it was everything that could be wished. Knowles came, produced his agreement, and paid all

the expenses. I have not seen him since, but shall to-morrow before I start. It was too late to allow visitors in the Castle when the court was over. I send you, however, £15, and will bring what more I can get with me to-morrow. He was rather taken aback by the amount of the expenses, as, indeed, I was myself—£50 for the schedule alone. However, it was shown to be correct, and he paid it, and he handed me £25. £5 I gave to pay Turner's bill, and £5 I have kept to pay off my various matters here. I shall have some more from him in the morning.

"And now, dearest love, I shall reserve all other matters till I come home. I shall be at the Euston Station at half-past nine.

"God bless you, my own dearest wife. Thank God! I shall hold you in my arms again to-morrow. My own beloved wife,

"Your affectionate Husband,

"C. J. MATHEWS."

LETTER ADDRESSED TO CHARLES J. MATHEWS, IN LANCASTER CASTLE, JULY, 1856.

To Charles Mathews, Esq.

"ILLUSTRIOUS SIR,

"Permit us to address you as a brother debtor, surrounded by oppressive circumstances akin to our own, which are rendered the more striking to one who, like yourself, has acquired a world-wide reputation as an

artist and elocutionist, and whose uniform kindness and manly conduct has excited the admiration of those who now respectfully, through this medium, tender you what they consider to be a just meed of approbation.

"With the newspaper gossip relative to your alleged state of affairs, which has been so extensively circulated, we have nothing to do, and we know not whether you are fiercely opposed or otherwise; we seek not to elicit any facts connected with your position, but we beg most earnestly and respectfully to compassionate you as one of the most ingenious amongst our common manhood; and having for the most part felt the pangs attendant upon the day and hour of tribulation, allow us to express the strength of our sympathetic feeling by stating that we heartily wish you a signal, complete, and honourable release from that load of embarrassment which so unhappily depresses us all, but which, by reason of your refined sensibility, must necessarily press with great force upon your mental organisation; and this feeling compels us to say 'Go on and conquer.' *

"Signed on behalf of the Members of the Long Room,

"JOHN HARRIDGE,

"Chairman.

"31st July, 1856."

* There is an odd flavour of Mr. Micawber about this letter.

CHAPTER V.

AT HOME AND ABROAD.

With his second marriage Mathews brings his autobiography to an end, and there are no signs among his papers of any intention of resuming it. Probably he felt that the story of the rest of his life—at all events as to its private side—would have but little general interest. The romance of youth and of adventure was finished. The interesting and curious train of circumstances which gradually transformed the clever, versatile, eager young man into the accomplished actor, and the self-possessed man of the world, had been developed to its end. There was no longer any excuse for associating Mathews himself with the Puffs, the Affable Hawks, or any of the host of reckless characters he personated so admirably. Sir Charles Coldstream was *un homme rangé*.

Henceforward the career was to be the ordinary and somewhat uneventful life of the practised and prosperous actor; occasionally appearing in a new part, but, as a rule, relying on the well-tried and safe successes of the past. As with that elaborate diary of Harley's, of

which mention is made in the early pages of this book, an exhaustive memoir of Mathews during the last twenty years of his life would involve the chronicling of much small beer, and the setting forth of many details, interesting no doubt at the time, but forgotten and not likely to be cared for now.

It will be enough to take a rapid survey of this, which we may call the prosperous period of Mathews's life, dwelling only on such points in its professional side as appear to throw any light upon the character of the man and of his work. Little assistance as to this period is afforded by correspondence, either of a professional or a private character. The long and graphic budgets of the Italian time gradually dwindle down into ordinary letters, and at last into the notes and scraps of writing which have taken the place of the elaborate literary productions which an unfrequent and expensive post carried to and fro in the time of the past two generations. In short, Mathews was a man of the world and of his time. As other people and circumstances changed, so did he. He adopted the customs of the later years into which a long life brought him, with as much ease as he threw himself into a new part. From the public point of view he grew up, as it were, year by year. Except for the unflagging vivacity, the irrepressible energy, and the undaunted perseverance, which faced ill or good fortune with the same cheerfulness, there was little in the

Mathews of later years to recall the struggling manager of the Lyceum, the hero of countless anecdotes of debts and duns and desperate expedients.

But prosperous or struggling, bond or free, he was always a public favourite, and on his return home from his second visit to America he was received with all the old enthusiasm. Nor was a grudging welcome accorded to the second Mrs. Mathews. The piece chosen for Mathews's reappearance in London, at the Haymarket, in October, 1858, was "London Assurance," in which of course he played his old part of Dazzle, and in which Mrs. Mathews was introduced to the London public as Lady Gay Spanker. The *début* was almost as successful as the reappearance, and for many years afterwards Mrs. Mathews held a prominent position on the English stage. During this engagement Mathews ran through the most successful pieces in his *répertoire*, and signalised his departure from the Haymarket in the following year by the production, on the occasion of his farewell benefit, of the "Road to Ruin" and "Paul Pry," in which he appeared, and it would seem not without success, in the singularly opposite characters of Goldfinch and of Poole's inquisitive hero.

For three years after his abandonment of management at the Lyceum, Mathews had been a member of E. T. Smith's company at Drury Lane. He was described in the bills as acting manager, and the word "acting" was appropriate enough, though not in the

sense in which it is usually understood by people whose business lies in theatres. The acting manager is so called because he rarely acts; on the same principle, it may be supposed, which decrees that the member of the House of Commons who has the fewest opportunities of speaking shall be called the Speaker. But Mathews, whatever he may have done in the way of management, did plenty of work in the way of acting during this engagement. From the "Game of Speculation" to the "Black Book," from "Married for Money" to "The Great Gun Trick," all came alike to him.

The sudden departure for America, in 1857, put an end to this engagement, but Smith had still a claim on the services of his errant acting manager, and after no little difficulty succeeded in enforcing it. In 1860–1861 Mathews was again a member of the Drury Lane Company; and in the latter year, with his wife, he appeared in an extraordinary romantic drama, "arranged by Charles J. Mathews," and called the "Pirates of the Savannah," in which rifle duels, Mexicans, practicable snakes, waterfalls, and all sorts of melodramatic properties were mixed up with light comedy in the most incongruous way.* The production of this piece seemed to

* At this time was published the well-known series of portraits of Mathews in "Patter v. Clatter," which is reproduced in this book by kind permission of Mr. Mitchell, of Bond Street. Respecting the photographs, Lane wrote to Mathews: "I was desired, by letter on Friday, and by word of mouth this morning, to make known to you that the Queen and the Prince Consort have been very



"PATTER V CLATTER"

From a Drawing on Stone by
R. J. LANE, A.R.A.
from Photographs by Charles Watkins & H. B. Lee.
Published by Mitchell, Old Bond Street.

be a pretty good proof that Drury Lane Theatre, under the then existing management, was no place for Mathews. So he appears to have thought himself, for the engagement was not renewed. In the same year he undertook a new enterprise, which seemed to come quite naturally to the son of the Mathews who had so often been "At Home" to admiring audiences in the old days. Mr. and Mrs. Mathews appeared in a new entertainment, called "Mr. and Mrs. Charles Mathews at Home," at the Concert Room in her Majesty's Theatre in the Haymarket, on the 25th November, 1861. The subject of this entertainment, which was illustrated by drawings by John O'Connor, from sketches by Mathews himself, was Mathews's own life, with numerous character personations by the performers in the duologue; and although the death of the Prince Consort seriously interfered with its present success in London, it subsequently enjoyed considerable popularity, especially in the provinces. The entertainment was, during the next

much pleased with your cartoons, the Prince thinking 'the last the best,' and then sending the whole down to Sir Charles Phipps. I have also brought away the glass photographs of Patter, it having been flatly denied that you could possibly have assumed those three faces, and asserted that Patter himself in the character of himself is not half handsome enough; *all* of which I flatly denied, on the score of having seen the piece some dozen times, and ended by drawing a moral that Patter *must be seen* to be appreciated. . . . . The Queen did this morning *again* express how much she was amused and pleased with the cartoons." The cartoons in question were some sketches of the Windsor Theatricals.

two years, varied more than once. Mathews's own experiences were supplemented by new attractions; one being called "My Wife and I," and one, a burlesque written by Mr. H. J. Byron, and called "The Sensation Fork; or, The Maiden, the Maniac, and the Midnight Murderers."

An odd coincidence during the performance of these "At Homes" recalled to Mathews's memory some very old times. His successor in the office of Surveyor of Bow and Bethnal Green happened, on one occasion, to be among the audience, and, taking umbrage at the manner in which the office was referred to, expostulated in the letter which follows. The doubt thrown upon the existence of a "Cutthroat Lane" appears to be without foundation. At all events Mathews's cards, during his time of office, bore that euphonious address.

"21, Upper Hamilton Terrace,
"January 4, 1862.

"DEAR SIR,

"As a brother professional of former years, and knowing what a good-tempered fellow you are, I feel sure you will not be offended at my making one or two remarks at the manner you hold up to ridicule the appointment you formerly held—that of District Surveyor of Bow. I highly appreciate your talents on the stage, and many are the times that I have witnessed your performances. I have been ready to split my sides

with laughter, and much have I been amused at your comic sayings and doings *at home.*

"You will open your eyes with some little astonishment when you know that the writer of this was your successor, and still continues to hold the appointment alluded to, and that it has yielded him for the last ten years an average income of upwards of *seven hundred pounds!* Now, as these appointments can only be held by gentlemen who have been brought up as architects, and have passed an examination before the Board of Examiners of the Institute of British Architects, it is very hurtful to my feelings, as well as to the fifty or sixty gentlemen who hold similar appointments (some of them at this moment being held by men the most eminent in their profession), to see them caricatured in your style, particularly in the scene with your funny wife when you are applying for your fee. When I tell you just at this time there is a disposition on the part of some of our rulers to cast odium on the holders of some of these appointments, I am sure you would not only withdraw from the public any circumstance of an offensive or ridiculous nature having a tendency to lower the respectability of them, but would desire to substitute some honourable mention of them so as to uphold the dignity of our profession.

"Whether your former office really was at such a locality as 'Cutthroat Lane,' or not (for certainly twenty years ago Bow was a most desolate place), it is

a very singular circumstance, but a fact, that the first fee I received after I succeeded you in the appointment was for superintending some building erected at a place called '*Botany Bay.*' Should you like to make use of this coincidence, pray do.

"I went to see you at home soon after you began to keep open house, and I wish now I had written to you sooner. I have already been the means of recommending many of my friends to do as I have done, and I can only assure you that by doing myself and the profession generally the favour I have asked, I shall go out of my way to patronise and advertise you on all occasions.

"Wishing you much success at your new residence, and many happy New Years,

"I remain, dear Sir, yours faithfully,

"J. H. GOOD.

"C. Mathews, Esq."

In 1863 Mathews was back again at the Haymarket, and the same year was signalised by his appearance at the Théâtre des Variétés in Paris, in a French version of "Cool as a Cucumber."

There appeared to be more than one good reason why this should be a somewhat hazardous enterprise. If the French actors remembered a certain performance in Drury Lane Theatre in 1848, and the part which Mathews subsequently took in regard to the pro-

ceedings on that occasion, it might have seemed even more than hazardous.

The riot which took place on the 12th of June, 1848, on the attempted production of "Monte Christo"* by the company of the Théâtre Historique, was one of the most serious, and one of the least justifiable, that ever occurred in the history of the English stage. Every effort had been made for days before to excite a feeling of animosity against the French players. Every artful appeal to the narrow-mindedness of the most narrow-minded among the public and the profession had been industriously circulated before the opening of the theatre. It was understood that a careful organisation existed, with the object of crushing the audacious foreigners once for all, and of effectually preventing any further attempt to interfere with native talent. A specimen of the literature of this campaign will show the sort of argument which was used on the protectionist side of the question, and which men of eminence and position were not ashamed in some measure to endorse by their subsequent acts.

BRITONS, STAND BY THE BRITISH DRAMA!

AND HELP TO RESTORE IT TO ITS PRISTINE HEALTH AND VIGOUR.

Shall the land that gave birth to that wonder of the world, Shakespeare, be remembered for its dramatic excellence in the era

* "Monte Christo" might, one would think, have been left to its fate. It was described as a grand drama in ten acts and eleven *tableaux*, occupying two evenings in the performance.

only of Elizabeth? Shall the theatres royal (?) Drury Lane and Covent Garden, erected and patented for the British Drama, be the means of crushing it by being devoted to Italian effeminacy and French immorality? Is our native drama, like Mary Queen of Scots, to be lost by modern David Rizzios? How is art in British acting and writing to be cultivated and encouraged, if their temples are thus to pervert the taste of the public from what is English? and these theatres will never be let to English speculators on moderate terms (witness the treatment Macready experienced from the proprietors of both), while grasping music-mongering foreigners can be found to outbid them. Let these foreigners keep to their strongholds, her Majesty's Italian Theatre in the Haymarket, and the royally-patronised French theatre in St. James's, and welcome. Let this very historique troop act at the latter theatre on those nights not applied to the Palais Royal troop, and their reception will be all they could desire; but do not let them invade the most sacred domain of the British author and actor. What would those identical French actors say, if their grand Théâtre Français at Paris became the arena for horse-riders and Coburg melodramas? But in France reciprocity with Englishmen is hopeless, not so their feeling towards Italians, Germans, and Spaniards.

The ever-varying *Times*, in most pitying and pitiful style, would, as usual, mislead the public by implying that the demonstration is against *all* foreigners, instead of truly stating that it is only against their occupation of our national theatres, and to confine their exuberance within its naturalised sphere of alienated English hearts.

As for those un-English small fry of the venal part of the Press, Albert Smith, Boucicault (the Acting Manager by-the-bye of this French company), Kenney and Co., whose slimy wanderings may sometimes be traced even in the most respectable of newspapers; who suck Frenchmen's brains through a quill and void the diluted matter forth as specimens of British society and manners, consign their immoral plagiarisms to the flame, and let it be the funeral pile of their ephemeral fame. But who, after all, has headed and aided this desecration? That concert-monster of charlatanism and ingratitude,

soupe Jullien, who has fattened on English patronage, and blighted pure musical taste, by the introduction in orchestras of church-bells, chain-cables, blacksmiths' anvils, blue and red fire, and every species of gag. It is an insult to an enlightened nation like this—an insult to common sense, and the age we live in. "Be liberal, but be just."

In reply to this remarkable composition the following handbill was circulated in Drury Lane:

TO THE PUBLIC.

An attempt has been made to influence public opinion against the Théâtre Historique by certain unjust and malicious insinuations, which the directors of the theatre feel themselves called upon to refute.

The actors of this theatre have not come to London for the purpose of substituting for the English drama their own pieces, or of entering into a competition, more or less lucrative, with the other theatrical establishments of London.

Availing themselves of the opportunity afforded by the closing of Drury Lane Theatre, which no English company seemed disposed to reopen, the directors of the Théâtre Historique felt desirous of presenting to a London auditory a few representations of the most celebrated works of M. Alex. Dumas and Auguste Maquet, in the hope that a public, so alive to the excellencies of literature and the arts, would witness their efforts with curiosity, if not with a favour which it would be their endeavour to merit.

The artists of all countries are brethren, and know not the word nationality. France received, with admiration and enthusiasm, the English *chefs d'œuvre* presented on their stage by those excellent tragedians, Miss Faucit and Mr. Macready. As conscientious as zealous in the cause of their art, although, perhaps, less talented, the actors of the Théâtre Historique expect from the loyalty and good feeling of a London public the honourable welcome due to honourable exertions.

What the riot itself was like will best be told by the following extract from *The Times*:

It has generally been the pride of Englishmen that they are free from those illiberal national prejudices by which most other countries are distinguished. It has been their boast that, although English artists have been maltreated by foreigners, the English public has made no reprisals. If the Parisians or the Belgians have misconducted themselves, it has not been considered a sufficient reason for Englishmen to misconduct themselves likewise. The doctrine is simple. If the foreign artist succeeds in pleasing enough people to enable him to pursue his profession in this metropolis, it is our custom to allow him to work on; if he fails, we allow him to tumble into oblivion with equal nonchalance.

Such, we thought, was English doctrine; but some score of people it seems think otherwise. According to the apparent creed of these individuals it is a meritorious deed to hiss French actors, simply because they act in French, and to "pre-damn" a French play before the rising of the curtain, on purpose to show that it is neither the dulness nor the immorality of the production that offends them. This new school of "protectionists" assembled last night within the walls of Drury Lane, which was opened for the performance of the play of "Monte Christo" with the company from the Théâtre Historique of Paris, and got up the most disgraceful exhibition of illiberality that can be conceived. Were we not convinced that the conduct of these persons was regarded with disgust by the better portion of the audience, we should feel ashamed at the prospect of the Drury Lane disturbance being known to the residents of Paris.

The "row" we have to record is a stupid "row," not only showing the illiberality of the rioters, but their paucity of invention. In the old "O. P." affair, there was some humour. A good joke now and then found its way into the uproar; but here was a long, dull, dismal, dreary display of nationality which was effective from the mere fact that it was wearisome. The "row" was a "slow" tiresome "row." One could not have conceived so much noise mixed up with

a display of soporific character. Fussell would have despised such heavy *tapageurs*. The poor Frenchmen did all they could to conciliate this amiable specimen of the British public. They opened by playing "God save the Queen," and when, two or three times afterwards, the rioters, who were loyal to a fault on this occasion, demanded a repetition of the anthem, they politely complied with the request. The plan of singing "God save the Queen" as a signal for uproar, is borrowed from the old "O. P." days, and is another mark of the want of originality which signalised the proceedings of last night. The rioters went on hallooing, hooting, whistling through their whistles, and uttering dull exclamations for upwards of three hours without any reason, and we wonder in what condition their lungs must be at the present moment. M. Jullien, as lessee of the house, attempted to restore order; but not a word of his speech was heard, and the noise pursued its dreary course to the termination of the piece. Some of the "demonstrators" wore little placards which disfigured their hats, and which recorded something about the want of encouragement to the English drama in Paris. Two or three individuals in the pit thought it the height of humour to put up their umbrellas; but the police deemed it a still better joke to conduct these persons out of the house, which proceeding prevented a repetition of the pleasantry. A person in the boxes was going to take off his coat and fight somebody, and thus, probably for the first time in his life, obtained applause. Never did we see a number of persons so busy in attempting to degrade themselves in the eyes of all rational beings. We have reason to think that some of these zealots, more worthy of better exploits than those of last night, were really persons of standing and respectability in the histrionic profession, and these we are sure, when they rise this morning, will look with regret on the stupid scene of yesterday, and take especial care not to let their friends know they were concerned in such an exhibition. At the conclusion of the tedious "riot," the mob repeated their chant of "God save the Queen," promised to repeat the "row" on Wednesday (to-morrow) night, and gave three groans for Albert Smith. What this gentleman had to do with the affair, or

why he incurred this heavy penalty, we do not know; but we should certainly say that under the circumstances three groans were more flattering than three cheers would have been.

It is not surprising that Macready, at this time, by the public vote at all events, at the head of the profession, should have been mortified almost beyond expression at those miserable proceedings. Undertaken avowedly in the interests of the British drama, and in the name of Shakespeare himself, the riot at Drury Lane Theatre was as much an insult to the profession as an outrage on public morality, and Macready was not slow to give expression to his views on the subject. On the 13th of June he wrote as follows to M. Hostein, the manager of the French company, with whom he had previously had an interview, and to whom he had expressed, in French, his "concern and indignation at the outrage offered them:"

"Theatre Royal, Drury Lane.

"SIR,

"I have the greatest pleasure in assuring you of the grateful recollection I entertain, and shall always cherish, of the very flattering reception I met with in Paris, on the three several occasions of my making professional visits to that city. Not only on the stage and in society, but from very many artists of the various theatres in Paris, I experienced the most gratifying and liberal attentions. It is with equal pain and surprise I

have heard of the disreputable proceedings at Drury Lane last night.

"I have the honour to be, Sir,

"Your very obedient Servant,

"W. C. MACREADY."

"13th June, 1848.

"À MONS. HOSTEIN."

It might have been supposed that nothing could have been better or more appropriate than this. Macready well knew the absurdity of the reciprocity cry. On three occasions he had appeared in Paris, and had been received with courtesy and kindness, and he was not the man to forget it. No man could more appropriately have expressed what should undoubtedly have been the feeling of the best among the English actors. But this simple matter elicited an almost incomprehensible outburst of excitement and anger—an outburst that would be quite incomprehensible if the personal animosity against Macready, which was very prevalent in the profession, and the extraordinary jealousy with which he was regarded at that time, be not taken into consideration. Mathews at least could have had no grounds for jealousy, and it is absurd to suppose that a man of his antecedents and education could for one moment have believed in the "reciprocity" idea, or could have countenanced such action as was taken in its name. But someway Mathews and Macready had always found it difficult to get on together.

The stupidity, if not malevolence, of an inventor and propagator of scandal had carried to Mathews, while he was still at Covent Garden, an absurd story about Macready, on which Mathews's comments were more free than respectful. The vehemence with which Macready took up the cudgels, and the impetuosity with which Mathews accepted the challenge, for a long time obscured the real merits of the case. It was not until reams of paper had been wasted, not until many hard words had been employed on both sides, and a great deal said that could never be quite forgotten, that a little judicious examination into the facts by a cool-headed friend, and the subsequent confession of the original culprit, proved Macready to have been in the right throughout, and the words attributed to him to have been nothing but an infamous invention. Mathews, being in the wrong, frankly owned it, and the breach appeared to have been closed. But later, when Madame Vestris and her husband were under the tragedian's management at Drury Lane, there were all sorts of difficulties—refusals on the lady's side to accept the parts allotted to her, fiery championship and outcries against the manager's tyranny from Mathews. It must have been a happy day for all three when the parting came.

No doubt a morbid recollection of these previous passages was in Mathews's mind, when he consented to join the onslaught which was made upon Macready in this matter of the Historique company, and when he allowed

his name to be used by Messrs. Hodgson and Burton, solicitors, who were employed to call Macready to account. Why the intervention of solicitors was considered necessary on this occasion it is difficult to see. Perhaps it was because it was felt that a greater share of the responsibility of the extremely strong language that was to be used—and there is no mistake about its strength—would attach to the actual writers than to anybody else, and that whereas that sort of thing would naturally only come into the day's work of a solicitor, it might have serious consequences to others.

Macready's answer sufficiently indicates the tone of the questions addressed to him:

"20, Wellington Street, Leeds, June 17, 1848.

"MESSRS. HODGSON AND BURTON,

"Gentlemen, — Upon my arrival here this evening your letter was delivered to me.

"You address me, I presume, as solicitors, instructed by Messrs. Webster, C. Kean, C. Mathews, Farren, Harley, Buckstone, &c. &c. &c., and numerous other performers, to inquire 'whether the words attributed to me by M. Hostein on the occasion of my visit of condolence to him, on what he states I called the disreputable conduct of my own countrymen, were actually uttered by me;' and, if so used, you 'ask the names

of those members of the profession by whom I was authorised to make such protestation.'

"You will allow me, in the first place, to observe that I do not admit the right of those gentlemen to make such inquiry of me; nor do I understand with what purpose you address those questions to me in their names; for, if not concerned in the disturbances referred to by me, my expressions, whatever they may have been, cannot apply to them; and if, directly or indirectly, implicated in the illegal and unworthy proceedings that took place at Drury Lane Theatre, they rightfully fall under the remarks, however severe, of every lover of order and fair dealing.

"There seems to me also no reason why *I* should have been singled out, and exceptions taken to *my* observations on a public occurrence which has been commented upon without reserve both by our daily press and in our Houses of Parliament! In a leading article of Friday's *Times* the parties engaged in this opposition are recorded as 'ruffians and blockheads, covering their country with disgrace in the eyes of Europe;' and by the noblemen who spoke upon the petition in the House of Lords, 'the attempt to put down the performances at Drury Lane Theatre' was characterised as 'infamous,' 'barbarous,' 'illiberal,' 'disgusting,' 'discreditable,' &c. &c. These gentlemen certainly strain at a gnat and swallow a camel, whilst, under such expressions, they select *my* words for the object of their special inquisition!

"I will not however refuse you the satisfaction you seek. M. Hostein's letter I have not seen, but if correctly quoted by you, it conveys the full spirit of my conversation with him, though not reported in the precise words I used. I told him that I called on him to express the disgust and indignation which, as an Englishman and an artist, I felt on reading in that day's journals the disgraceful proceedings of the previous night. I replied to his questions, that I remembered with fervent gratitude my receptions in Paris on three several engagements; adding, that I deeply sympathised with him, and felt certain, that every respectable actor, and the better part of my countrymen, did the same. This, the sum and substance of what I said, does not at all differ in sentiment from what you have quoted; but it so happened, that I did not make any formal 'protest' for myself, nor did I fall into the error of making it in the name of any one upon your list; which, had it occurred to me, I might spontaneously have done, under —as it now appears—a mistaken impression in regard to those gentlemen's opinions.

"Your inquiry, I believe, is fully answered; but, though loath to prolong this letter, I think it right to add, that I did not know for a certainty that either actors or authors were in combination to carry on those disturbances, till informed so by M. Hostein. I was even ignorant of the presentation of Mr. B. Webster's petition; and when it was reported to me from

Mr. Arthur Webster, that Mr. C. Kean had applied, or was applying, to the Lord Chamberlain against the French actors, I thought I was only doing that gentleman an act of justice in asserting most confidently my disbelief of the rumour. In this same spirit I assured M. Hostein of my firm convictions, giving others credit for what I myself believed and believe to be right. But you tell me, there are 'numerous other members of the profession,' in addition to the list you have given, who disapprove 'the course I have adopted.' You, and perhaps they, will allow me to say, for the sake of that profession, I sincerely and deeply regret it; but am not without hope and belief that there are very many English actors who participate in my sentiments, and who would, without hesitation, adopt the course condemned by your clients.

"I am, Gentlemen,

"Your very obedient, humble Servant,

"W. C. MACREADY."

Whatever may have been the judgment of the theatrical profession on the heated arguments, angry accusations, and bitter recriminations to which this unfortunate affair gave rise, there could have been but one opinion among the independent portion of the public as to who was, in principle at all events, in the right. It is difficult in these times—when it has become common to see London theatres successfully managed by

foreigners, when foreign artists compete with "native talent" in almost every branch of the profession, and when the transfer of the whole company of the Théâtre Français to the Gaiety Theatre is taken quite as a matter of course—to understand how Macready's action should have been so misjudged, or how so great a storm could have been raised in so small a teacup. The reasons below the surface are not readily intelligible without a clue, but it was a very pretty quarrel as it stood, and, even after the letter of June 17th, there was an angry correspondence. In the end, Macready, if only from having right on his side at first, certainly had the best of it. Whatever the result, the business was not one to make the name of Charles Mathews acceptable to French actors or to Parisian playgoers.

But it was not only from the actors, and from the audiences who might still be inclined to take their parts against the inhospitable actors and managers of London, that danger might have been feared. The French dramatists and critics had had their little difficulty with Mathews, and were not without a grievance. The manager of the Lyceum had stepped into the International Copyright controversy, which raged fiercely in 1851 and 1852, with a pamphlet,* addressed to the

* The full title of this pamphlet was "Lettre de M. Charles Mathews aux Auteurs Dramatiques de la France, with a Translation from Himself by Himself, as a specimen of 'Fair Imitation or Adaptation,' according to the terms of the International Copyright Convention."

French authors, ridiculing their case in the lightest and airiest style, and treating them with banter, which had in it a considerable mixture of something very like contempt. They were told that they did not know what they wanted; that England was not worth their attention; that French pieces were not habitually adapted for the English stage; that the folly and indecency of French plays would naturally prevent their introduction into London; and that they ought not to show so much eagerness to make money. Mr. Charles Reade, in his curious "Eighth Commandment," points out that, at the time this pamphlet was written, the Lyceum was doing very well "on two French legs"—"The Game of Speculation" and the "Prince of Happy Land"—and describes the document itself as "a sprightly tract, sensible here and there, downright funny everywhere, and supernaturally illogical." M. Jules Janin's criticism in the *Journal des Débats* treats it with a lighter hand:

"Ils avaient de l'esprit, ces Anglais du dernier siècle; ils ont encore beaucoup d'esprit, les Anglais d'aujourd'hui. En voici un qui s'appelle Charles Mathews. . . . Ce Charles Mathews, qui écrit en meilleur français que son confrère le Français, dans sa moquerie animée et pleine de goût, n'a pas franchi un seul instant les justes limites; il a été un écrivain léger, rieur, et de la meilleure compagnie, aussi loin du gros mot que du coup de poing. Aussi sa lettre est jolie, et bien faite; elle sera lue avec plaisir, et les honnêtes gens peuvent sans honte la reproduire."

The great feuilletonist was evidently more struck by the literary merit of the pamphlet than by its statements and arguments, and indeed was not so much interested in the question at issue as many of his brethren of the pen. But it gave offence to many dramatists and journalists, and the waves of the controversy ran high for a long time. The experiment at the Variétés was to show whether or no the storm had finally subsided.

Whatever apprehensions might have been entertained on this head were speedily dissipated. Théophile Gautier, in the *Moniteur* feuilleton, spoke, indeed, of a time when the presence of foreign actors had caused tumults which almost became riots. But he referred, not to the Drury Lane difficulty, but to the ill reception accorded to English actors on their first visit to Paris after the Restoration. The old ill-will, he said, had given way before steam and increased intercourse, and the two countries had begun to know each other better. As Paris had welcomed Macready and Helen Faucit, so London had received the French companies at the St. James's; and as the English public had applauded Fechter when he played in English at the Princess's and the Lyceum, so Paris was ready to give an eager and appreciative reception to the Englishman, Mathews, as he grappled with the difficulties of playing a part in French. The mishaps of the Théâtre Historique company, and the opposition to the French dramatic authors, were all forgotten.

The part itself was familiar enough to Mathews. He had selected "Cool as a Cucumber" for his first appearance, and had himself arranged the French version. The result of the first night (September 7, 1863) was not encouraging. The Englishman had arrived in Paris without being announced; he was altogether unknown to the public, and but few even of the critics were accurately informed as to his position and success upon the English stage. The audience were quite prepared to receive the actor with generous appreciation, and the farce went thoroughly well at first, but towards the close the public attention flagged and ominous signs of disapprobation were heard. Indeed, as the notice in the *Opinion Nationale* remarked a week after: "Il a eu ce moment beaucoup de succès et fait salle comble; mais il a bien failli ne pas réussir, et il s'en est fallu de bien peu que le premier soir de son début à Paris ne fut aussi le dernier de ses représentations. On l'a vertement sifflé ce jour-là." Francisque Sarcey, the writer of this notice, goes on to protest against the piece. It had been played, he says, four or five hundred times in London, and, naturally, Mathews thought it was all right. But the smallest Vaudeville actor, the most mediocre author, could have told him that it could by no means succeed in Paris. The *dénouement*, which ought to be brought about with the utmost rapidity in pieces of this kind, drags lazily along. If the piece had been offered to a French manager, the author would

have had the door shut in his face. It was clear that however much it may have pleased the taste of the English people, it only seemed wearisome to the French audience. This is, perhaps, a rather severe summing up of "Cool as a Cucumber," which afforded Mathews one of his best parts; but there is no doubt that as to the result the critic is right, and that but for a piece of presence of mind on Mathews's part, the conclusion of the farce was, in fact, nearly the conclusion of the engagement. Ernest Filloneau, in the *Gazette des Etrangers*, gives the story tersely and clearly. "Malheureusement," he says, "la pièce a failli compromettre son succès. Le commencement n'allait pas mal.; mais bientôt quelques bruits de mauvais augure s'élèverent dans la salle. Vers le fin, le père tardant toujours à donner son consentement, et le public continuant le tapage, M. Mathews eut l'heureuse idée de dire: 'Voyons, père Gogo, dépêchons nous; permettez à ces enfants de s'épouser . . . le public s'impatiente.' Aussitôt on a applaudi à outrance l'homme d'esprit et l'artiste hors ligne."

Mathews's own account of the first night and of this fortunate bit of "gag" was contained in a letter to *The Daily Telegraph*,* a leading article in which,

* The news was sent to Mrs. Mathews, senior, in the following letter:

"Paris, Sept. 9, 1863.

"My dearest Mother,

"I wouldn't write until I could really be certain, as there are many slips 'twixt the cup and the lip, especially in theatrical matters,

commenting on the first news of the partial discontent of the audience at the Variétés, had suggested—as had been suggested by the Paris correspondent of *The Era* as well as of other London papers—that there had been an organised cabal to hoot the Englishman down, or, at all events, that the professional claque had not been properly seen to. Nestor Roqueplan, in the *Constitutionnel*, remarked thus upon the disapprobation, scouting the idea of its having proceeded from the claque:

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and more particularly in French theatres; and if I had detailed to you the hopes and fears of the last ten days, I should only have put you on the same gridiron with myself. But now I can throw up my cap, and cry 'Hurra!' I came out at the Variétés on Monday, and with the greatest success. The piece was rather too long, but last night, after being cut, went off brilliantly.

"I will write you more fully next week, after the criticisms in the papers appear, which do not come out till Monday next. I *think* I have made a great success, but this week I am feeling my way. By Tuesday next I shall be sanguine or otherwise; in the meantime, you may rest perfectly satisfied with my success, and so announce it. I am engaged for a fortnight, and, if attractive, to go on for a month. I believe I told you the piece was 'Cool as a Cucumber,' adapted in French by myself. You will be pleased to hear that they call me a *jeune homme* of five-and-twenty. My wife says that she is *sure* that I *never* looked so well or played so well as I did on Monday night. We both wish that you could have been here to have witnessed it.

"I will send you all the criticisms—good, bad, and indifferent—that may appear.

"Bouffé was present both nights, and sends his best love to you.

"God bless you, my dearest mother.

"Your affectionate Son,

"C. J. MATHEWS."

"The French Vaudeville is bad, the English actor excellent; at the first representation a part of the public hissed the piece. The hissers were but clumsy; the experienced and delicate hissers of the Odéon would not have failed to treat the foreign actor handsomely, and to detach him from the piece to which he puts his name, and which may have been originally good, but spoiled by some subsequent patching." He then goes on to speak of "Mr. Mathews, a charming and distinguished artist, who takes his place on the same lines with our most subtle and celebrated comic actors." Mathews's letter will very clearly show his own views upon the point, and indicates also the brilliant success which crowned the experiment.

"TO THE EDITOR OF 'THE DAILY TELEGRAPH.'

"SIR,

"I have only just seen your paper of Saturday, containing a notice of my first appearance at the Théâtre des Variétés. Allow me, in the first place, to thank you heartily for all the kind and flattering things you say, and say so pleasantly, of me, and next to correct the impression you are evidently under that I was not only treated with injustice on the first night by the Parisian public, but that there was actually an organised opposition to my performance. Now let me beg of you at once to dismiss this idea from your mind. There was neither cabal nor organised opposition of any kind, and

the fault, such as it was, was entirely my own, and not that of the audience. I believe they came with every intention to be pleased, as I met with a most cordial reception, and two-thirds of the piece went off with shouts of laughter and every sign of good humour; but the latter portion was not to their taste—it dragged, and I soon discovered that they were getting bored. But it was not any *one* 'ill-natured fellow in the pit.' The necessity for explanation at the end of every piece, according to our English ideas of dramatic propriety—the seeing everybody married and settled, and all the obscure points of the plot mathematically cleared up before dropping the curtain—is not only not required by the French public, but is deemed tiresome. They like to drop the curtain when the fun is over, and guess the rest; and certain signs, which had nothing to do with *me*, but with the piece only, showed me that they had had enough, and were getting out of patience at the long winding-up. I repeat, the fault was mine, and not theirs; and had one of their own favourite actors played the part, I believe he would have been treated in the same way. 'Ill-will' I am sure there was none; for when, in the midst of their discontent, I said suddenly to the old man of the piece: 'Come, come, for goodness' sake make haste and marry the young people; can't you see that the public is getting impatient?' the *à propos* speech was received with the greatest good humour, and was followed by a tremendous salvo of applause.

"On the second night, after wholesale cutting, which the manager had advised previous to the first performance, but to which I objected, having played the piece ('Cool as a Cucumber') so often successfully in London —an obstinacy for which I paid the penalty—it went off from beginning to end with what actors call 'one roar,' and I am playing it nightly to 'overflowing and enthusiastic audiences.' There is a procession every morning to the box office, and, in short, I may venture to say that I am—poetically speaking—the 'talk of Paris.'

"I hope you will make the *amende honorable* to the Parisian public by publishing these facts. I have every reason to be delighted with the perfect success of my experiment. I have received nothing but compliments and kindnesses from actors, authors, managers, public, everybody; and the criticisms in the newspapers are all so flattering and cordial that I cannot resist sending you them as vouchers for the truth of my statement. I am receiving an excellent salary; and as my engagement at the Haymarket prevents my remaining here beyond the end of the month, I am invited to return after Christmas, when a comedy will be written by a French author expressly for me.

"Again thanking you for your exceedingly kind notice,

"I am, Sir, yours, &c.,

"C. J. MATHEWS.

"Paris, Sept. 16."

The criticisms in the Parisian newspapers were indeed something to be proud of. There was no exception to the universal chorus of approbation. Mathews was compared to Odry, to Perlet, to Monnier, to Levassor, to Lafont, and especially to Arnal. "Why does not the English actor play Arnal's great part in 'L'Homme Blasé' in French, as he has already played it in English?" was one question; "Why not play one of Levassor's or of Brasseur's 'Anglais pour Rire'?" was another. It was agreed on all sides that the Parisian public were ready for something better than Brown in "L'Anglais Timide," and that there was no reason why Mathews should not be just as popular in Paris as he was in London. The engagement was a brilliant success, and the farewell benefit on October 17th was a veritable triumph, swelled as it was by the presence on the stage of Roger, Déjazet, Lafont, and Mathews's old friend Bouffé.* The announcement of his intended return "next year" was hailed with enthusiasm.

* Bouffé had been for many years on terms of the closest intimacy with Mathews and his mother, and was an enthusiastic admirer of the English actor, both personally and professionally. Twenty years before Mathews played in Paris, Bouffé had written of him to Mrs. Mathews, senior, as "Ce bon Charles, qui est l'homme le plus artiste, le plus aimable, que j'ai jamais vu. Quel cœur, quel sentiment, qu'il est aimable et rempli de qualités. Il est bien votre fils. Aussi je l'aime comme un frère. Je parle de lui à toutes mes connaissances, et sans que les personnes l'aient jamais vues, elles croient l'entendre et se trouver près de lui. Je pense que, sans être peintre, j'ai parfaitement tracé son portrait."

On his return home, after his Parisian triumph, Mathews, on November 23rd, 1863, made his reappearance on the London stage—where he had not been seen for two years—at the Haymarket Theatre. The pieces chosen for the occasion were "Cool as a Cucumber"—a most appropriate selection under the circumstances—and a revival of Mr. Planché's classical extravaganza "Medea," which afforded an excellent opportunity for the display of Mathews's extraordinary powers of "patter," and provided as well a telling part for his wife. The reception of both artists was of a most enthusiastic sort; and it was abundantly clear that Mathews's temporary withdrawal from the London stage had in no wise weakened his hold on his audiences, or diminished that personal popularity with the public, which he enjoyed to an extent perhaps unexampled in the history of the English stage.

In the following year Mathews fulfilled an engagement at the St. James's, adding two popular parts to his already long list, the one in "Woodcock's Little Game" and the other in "Adventures of a Love-letter," adapted by the actor from Victorien Sardou's "Pattes de Mouche;" and playing, during the term of the engagement, a great number of his stock parts.

The autumn of 1865 saw Mathews back again in Paris. This time the scene of action was the Vaudeville, and the part Sir Charles Coldstream—in the Paris version

transformed into Sir Charles Coldcream—in "Used Up." The success of the performance was undoubted, although somewhat unexpected by the company with whom he was to play. The story of their fears, and of the reasons for their apprehensions, is so well told by Francisque Sarcey, in the *Opinion Nationale*, that a free translation of it is well worth quoting here; and one of his preliminary remarks is also deserving remark for its intensely Parisian tone: "It is not for material advantages that the Englishman comes to us," says the critic; "English actors are better paid than ours. *Mais il est doux d'être loué par les journaux Français. 'O Athéniens,' s'écriait Alexandre, 'que de choses je fais pour vous plaire.'*" No one but a Parisian journalist could have publicly patted himself and his order so complacently on the back.

"'L'Homme Blasé,'" the story runs, "was one of Mathews's best parts in England. People who have seen him play it—notably Regnier of the Comédie Française—have assured us that it showed him to be a comedian of the first rank. Arnal, who is certainly not paid to praise his rivals, has often said that he had never seen anything to compare with it. I cannot help thinking, however, that he did not include himself in the comparison.

"It was not strange that Mathews, wishing to give the French public an idea of his talent, should have chosen a part in which by all accounts he excelled, and

should have troubled himself but little about the memories which had been left behind him by the admirable comedian for whom the piece was written. So he came to the Vaudeville, and the rehearsals began.

"It cannot be denied that these rehearsals caused the professionals engaged serious anxiety. The English are not good at rehearsing. They mount five acts in four days, without even taking counsel with the author, who is discarded after the preliminary reading. As for us, it takes us six weeks to put five acts on their legs; and all concerned — lessee, manager, author, not to mention all the friends of the theatre — put their shoulders to the wheel.

"We do not understand the hurry of English artists in matters of this kind, and Mathews could not adapt himself to our way of doing business. It seems that at the five or six rehearsals, which were got out of him with the greatest difficulty, he kept his eyes fixed on the floor and mumbled his words like a schoolboy saying his lesson. All present were in despair, although they were too polite to show it, and especially M. Duvert. What! was this the great artist he had been told of! He heard him speak with the greatest discouragement. He waited for one situation which Arnal had pointed out as one of those in which Mathews made his greatest effect. 'If he is good when he comes to that,' he said to himself, 'all is lost; for that will be a certain sign that he will play all the rest of the part as he is playing

it now.' The situation came; Mathews did not seem to know in the least what he was about. 'He is execrable! Heaven be thanked, there is still hope!'

"What increased everybody's alarm was that it was obvious that the English actor was not absolutely master of his words. He kept continually going through a performance which became singularly aggravating, translating, as he went on, into French, the speeches which presented themselves to his mind in his own language; and however often he wanted a word, he declined any assistance from the prompter.

"It seems that prompters do not exist on the other side of the Channel, or, at all events, that very little use is ever made of them. When by chance (and the accident is unusual) an actor's memory is at fault, he recovers himself by adding to his part any parasitical phrases which may occur to him, and by thus giving himself time to regain the thread of his speech. Whenever the prompter of the Vaudeville saw that Mathews was in difficulties, he gave him the word, which only worried the islander more, and caused him to square up to the interrupter, and, with menacing fists, to say: 'Don't prompt; don't prompt!'

"Then he began to laugh; but the authors didn't. I saw one of them the evening before the great day, and he was anything but reassured; now, however, he ought to be. Mathews has made a very great and a perfectly legitimate success."

This lively sally contains matter, even now, worthy of the attention of many English stage managers, although it is true that too little care is too often given to rehearsals in this country. But it is a little odd that the accusation of perfunctory rehearsing should have been brought against a manager and actor who was one of the first in London to try to ensure that completeness of *mise en scène* which can only be attained by frequent and careful rehearsal, and for which the public are now learning to look as a right. As to the prompter, it would seem that things must have changed a good deal in four-and-twenty years.

Mathews probably thought that he had played in "Used Up" often enough to warrant his taking things easily at the Vaudeville; but it is rather odd that "Cool as a Cucumber," his first venture in Paris, had, previous to its first performance in London, had but little advantage in the way of rehearsal. Writing to his mother on the subject, Mathews says: "I have to play a new part to-night without having studied it (which I was prevented by business from doing yesterday), or rehearsing it. I have called it for three rehearsals this morning, beginning at twelve. I hope we shall be open to-night and believe we shall, but must not be held responsible if we do not."

Sarcey held that Mathews, in the first act of "Used Up," by reason of his *manières distinguées*, was superior to Arnal. "Arnal y mettait plus de verve et de feu. Il a,

lui (Mathews), un naturel exquis et une incroyable finesse." The Frenchman was, however, preferred in the second act, and the verdict was that Mathews and Arnal ought to share the piece between them. But although he was not held to be altogether the best exponent of the part the Parisians had seen, "Le succès de Mathews n'en a pas moins été une fête. On riait, on battait des mains; on l'a rappelé; et Arnal, qui était venu le voir, l'est allé embrasser dans sa loge."

Whether, after the successful performance of "Cool as a Cucumber" at the Variétés, in 1863, the Parisian journalists had taken the trouble to learn a little more about Mathews than they had known before, may, perhaps, reasonably be doubted; but the concluding paragraph of the notice above quoted certainly looks as if some recollection of the famous pamphlet had crossed Sarcey's mind—more especially as the English version of "L'Homme Blasé" was produced at Mathews's own theatre. "Ought not Mr. Mathews to tell his countrymen that it is shameful that the English theatres should make immense sums of money out of our pieces, and not account for a penny to our authors; that the translator of 'L'Homme Blasé' should have put thirty thousand francs into his pocket, while Messrs. Duval and Lausanne have not received a sou? If Mr. Mathews, in return for the welcome we have given *him*, will plead the cause of our *vaudevillistes* on the English stage, we shall think ourselves too well paid for our hospitality."

This was Mathews's last engagement in Paris, the proposition contained in the following letter, written two years afterwards, not having been carried out :

"17 Mars, 1867.

"MON CHER NORIAC,

"Un mot—ou plutôt une question. Qu'est-ce que vous allez faire pendant le mois de Juillet ? On dit que vous allez reprendre 'La Belle Hélène.' Voulez-vous de moi pour quelques semaines à cette époque pour commencer ou terminer le spectacle ? Il y aura beaucoup d'Anglais et d'Américains à Paris pour l'Exposition, deux troupes Anglaises, &c. &c. &c., et je prendrais volontiers ma part dans les cérémonies. La même somme que vous me donnez autrefois me contenterait.

" Qu'est-ce que vous en pensez ?

"R. S. V. P.

"Tout à vous,

"C. M."

"Cool as a Cucumber" was, however, played at least once more in French. Mathews accomplished the feat of playing it in July, 1867, at the Olympic, in English, and at the St. James's, for Ravel's benefit, in French, on the same night.

It is odd to be reminded, on the authority of

Mr. G. A. Sala, after reading of Mathews's "naturel exquis" and "incroyable finesse," that the hero of "L'Homme Blasé" was once played at the Adelphi by that broadest of low comedians, Edward Wright, in a pair of bright scarlet plaid trousers!

CHAPTER VI.

ROUND THE WORLD.

THE next few years were passed in the regular routine of engagements in London and country tours, and offer little or nothing of general interest; and it was not until October of 1869 that anything occurred which calls for special comment. On the twelfth of that month Mrs. Mathews, senior, died, quietly and peacefully, at Chelsea Villa, Fulham. She had lived eighty-seven years, and had known, in her time, as much trouble and anxiety as falls to the lot of most of the children of men. But she was always happy in the love and dutiful care of her idolised son, and, living long enough to see him prosperous and famous, was contented with the lot that fate had given her. One of her last letters to him says: "God will be sure to receive a mother's prayer for all the good deeds of a good son to an affectionate mother." In early life Mrs. Mathews had been on the stage, and acted for some years at Drury Lane and the Haymarket, but the profession was distasteful to her, and she retired from it in 1810. After her husband's death she published his memoirs in four amusing and interesting

volumes, and was also the authoress of "Anecdotes of Actors," "Tea Table Talk," "Friends for the Fireside," and a number of magazine articles on theatrical and similar subjects. No one can read her letters, or obtain even a little insight into her character, without feeling that she was a good and just woman, and that, among the many advantages with which Charles Mathews started in life, may be counted one of the greatest of all—that he was trained, in early life, by a wise and careful mother. Indeed, it was not only to his early life that his mother's wisdom and care applied. For sixty-six years she watched over him with unceasing interest and love, and, as late as 1849—when she was very ill, and when, as she supposed, the end was near—she drew up the following memorandum for her son's guidance after she should be taken from him:

"MEM. 1849.

"I herein enjoin my beloved son to keep the following volumes always at hand in his dressing-room, on a shelf appropriated to them; and I solemnly conjure him never to omit reading some portion daily of their contents. They will be an ever-renewing source of lasting good, and will inculcate better than a mother's homilies, which are apt to be regarded as matters of course, the lessons that point to present and future happiness. They will, from time to time, remind him that his eternal

welfare is inseparably annexed to the temporal use and acknowledgment of his Creator's goodness, accompanied by a constant homage and firm belief in the Triune God, and trust and dependence upon his blessed Saviour's merits and sacrifice, remembering that His promises are eternal as our future state, and can only benefit those of *perfect faith* and the performance of good works. Let him remember that 'Only the *just* can see God.'

"The books will be found upon the shelves at my bedside, and are as follows: The Holy Bible (the last book in the hands of his dying father); his father's Prayer Book; Law's Serious Call; Baxter's Saints' Rest; Bishop Andrews' Devotions; Ditto in MS.; Jeremy Taylor (abridged); Logan's Sermons; Mr. Irons's Sermons; Thomas à Kempis; Sabbath Book; &c. &c. &c."

Shortly after his mother's death, Mathews came to a decision from which many a younger man might well have shrunk. He was now nearly sixty-six years old, and had been on the stage, actively and almost incessantly employed, for thirty-four years. If he had come to the conclusion that it was time to think about taking a little rest, or had even suggested an early retirement, it would have seemed to everybody a natural thing enough; but that was about the last thing of which he was likely to think. A fresh departure and new audiences were the objects he had in view, not a farewell to old friends. He decided, for a little change, on

undertaking the long tour of Australia, New Zealand, and so home, *vid* the United States.

It was before an Edinburgh audience, on the night of his benefit, Nov. 26, 1869, that this determination was first made public, in the course of one of those bright and chatty before-the-curtain speeches, of which no man ever was a greater master:

"Ladies and Gentlemen," ran this confidential communication, "you will have seen by the announcement in the bills that I have a communication to make—an important one it says—but that of course depends upon circumstances. What may be very important to me may be a matter of utter indifference to you; and yet when I tell you that I am about to reveal to you a secret, I count on your curiosity at least to secure me a certain amount of interest as to what I am about to say. You are informed that I am going to make my last appearance here for a considerable period, and I am now before you to explain why. Can you guess? No, I feel sure you can't. You imagine, perhaps, that I have had a serious quarrel with Mr. and Mrs. Wyndham, and that we can never meet again. Not a bit of it. I have had the pleasure of their acquaintance for upwards of five-and-twenty years—have always been on the most friendly terms, and I love them both dearly. So that won't do. Perhaps you think I have to complain of the conduct of the company. Quite the reverse. If anyone has to complain it must be the performers themselves, for I

have given them more study during the last fortnight than many people could digest in a month, and yet we are all as cordial together as possible. Can it be the orchestra? No. From the leader to the big drum—nay, even down to the piccolo—we are all in perfect harmony. Then it must be the audience that I have to complain of? Still less. The gratifying houses I have been playing to, and the brilliant assemblage I see before me this evening, puts that out of the question, and I should be most ungrateful if I did not appreciate the reception I have met with. It is not as if it were a first or second engagement—I am not the 'latest novelty,' nor are my pieces 'sensational'—I have paid you one or two visits annually ever since I first entered the profession, now some five-and-thirty years ago, and have always met with the most friendly welcome and the most remunerative results. Then, what is it? Own yourselves puzzled, and I will divulge the secret. You must know, then, that every year, when I take my couple of months' holiday, I make a little trip abroad, and, much as I hate the sea, brave the terrors of the awful voyage from Dover to Calais in order to air myself in Switzerland and Italy. Well, this year I am going to vary my programme, and am about to make a little pleasure trip—where do you think?—to Australia. Now the secret's out! In January next I sail for Melbourne, and, instead of a little outing of a couple of months, contemplate a gigantic one of perhaps a couple

of years, including a voyage even more awful than that from Dover to Calais; for, though I go what is called 'overland,' that's only a myth, the 'oversea' occupying nearly two months, and the 'overland' not occupying more than ten hours. Only a ha'porth of 'bread' to all that 'sack.' Yes, I am going to treat my wife to a little pleasure excursion to the Antipodes. I have had so many pressing invitations from our brethren on the other side of the globe that I have at last yielded to the temptation, and have no doubt that they will receive me kindly and hospitably, and send me back with plenty of good colonial produce in my pockets. Fancy me at the Antipodes! Why, I shan't be able to tell whether I am standing on my head or my heels. However, I must try and preserve my equilibrium there, and trust I may come back to you again right side uppermost. Ladies and gentlemen, till then, allow me to wish you, respectfully and cordially, farewell."

This announcement created a great amount of interest, and arrangements were at once made to afford Mathews's numerous friends and admirers an opportunity of wishing their old favourite "God-speed" on his voyage. A benefit performance at Covent Garden was arranged for the morning of January 4th, 1870, and a dinner at Willis's Rooms for the following Monday. Both entertainments were signally successful.

The theatrical performance was remarkable, not only for the brilliant audience it attracted—an audience so

large as to tax even the ample resources of Covent Garden Theatre—but for the extraordinary gathering of the principal actors and actresses of the day, who gave their services on the occasion.

The friendly spirit which was exhibited by all concerned on this occasion was most gratifying to its object. It was not only that the services of the profession were freely given. The manner of the giving was the most important part of it, and the letters which were addressed to Mathews were full of the pleasantest possible things put in the pleasantest possible way. Simply as a specimen of the general tone of these agreeable communications one may here be quoted. Mr. Toole's letter faithfully represents the spirit of the profession:

"The Prince's Theatre, Oxford Street, Manchester,
"Nov. 29th, 1869.

"MY DEAR MATHEWS,

"You are quite right in your note, I shall indeed have the greatest pleasure in taking part on such an interesting occasion as your benefit, although I do not like the notion of your going so far away, even for a short time, for I have been looking forward to a chance of seeing you act in town during the season. If I only get a glimpse of you for a few minutes it brightens me up and does me a power of good. I envy the Australian manager, *not* for the money which he will certainly make by your engagement, but that he will be able to

sit in his box and enjoy your delightful acting, than which nothing is more enjoyable to

"Yours very faithfully,

"J. L. TOOLE.

"Make me useful in any and every way—acting, posting bills, &c. &c."

All the principal theatres sent representatives. Scenes from the popular pieces of the day were followed by the second act of the "Critic," which was played with an astonishing cast,* and produced even more than its usual

* The distribution of the parts is worthy of preservation:

Dangle	MR. ALFRED WIGAN.
Sneer	MR. BARRY SULLIVAN.
Puff	MR. CHARLES MATHEWS.
Under Prompter	MR. CHARLES MATHEWS, JUN.
Lord Burleigh	MR. J. B. BUCKSTONE.
Governor of Tilbury Fort ...	MR. FRANK MATTHEWS.
The Earl of Leicester ...	MR. J. CLARKE.
Sir Walter Raleigh	MR. LIONEL BROUGH.
Sir Christopher Hatton ...	MR. W. H. PAYNE.
Master of the Horse... ...	MR. J. D. STOYLE.
Beefeater	MR. J. L. TOOLE.
Whiskerandos	MR. COMPTON.
First Sentinel	MR. F. PAYNE.
Second Sentinel	MR. H. PAYNE.
First Niece	MRS. KEELEY.
Second Niece	MRS. FRANK MATTHEWS.
Tilburina	MRS. CHARLES MATHEWS.
Confidante	MRS. CHIPPENDALE.

The bill of the play also included the names, among others, of Benjamin Webster, Mrs. Alfred Mellon, Mr. and Mrs. Bancroft, H. J. Montague, Addison, Mrs. Hermann Vezin, H. J. Byron, J. S. Clarke, Madame Celeste, &c. &c.

effect. Mathews could rarely have played Puff better than on this occasion, although the stage was rather too large for him; but perhaps the greatest hit of the day, and the cause of the most spontaneous laughter and the most enthusiastic applause, was a happy interpolation of Mrs. Bancroft's, in the scene from "School," which was played in the course of the morning. "What do you consider the most valuable possession of Australia?", Naomi Tighe was asked in the examination scene. The prompt and appropriate answer, "Charles Mathews," brought down the house. An address from Mathews himself* put a triumphant climax on a brilliant benefit.

The dinner was, proportionately, almost as well attended as the benefit; and is specially noticeable in that the guest of the evening, by an inversion of the general rules which hold good on such occasions, did the honours to himself and occupied the chair. This was an experiment which would be, to say the least, doubtful in most cases, and might, if accepted as a precedent, lead to unpleasant results; but, on this occasion, Mathews's *bonhomie*, and the calmness with which he accepted the situation—as if it were quite an everyday matter—made the arrangement seem not only natural, but almost inevitable.

There was a cheerier air about the proceedings than usually marks the public dinner, and the chairman

* See Appendix A, page 300.

succeeded in making everybody quite as much at home as he himself seemed to be. "The usual loyal and patriotic toasts" have rarely been more felicitously given, or more productive of applause and mirth; and probably even Mathews himself never elicited a more hearty roar than when he said, in the calmest and most matter-of-fact way, during the speech introducing the toast of the army and navy, that he had never been in the army, although he had been in many a mess; and that the only chance he ever had of joining the navy was once when he had a narrow escape of getting into the Fleet! *

A few days after these festivities Mathews, with Mrs. Mathews and her son, left London for the "delightful little excursion," as he had called his journey in the Covent Garden speech.

"One line to report progress," he writes presently, under date Cairo, Feb. 1st, 1870, to an old friend. "After a pleasant week at Nice we left Marseilles in the *Poonah*, and had a very fast run of five days to Alexandria, getting there on Friday morning. We were taken possession of on landing, and carried off into the desert; not by Bedouins, but by a kind friend who has a charming villa at Ramleh, about five miles from Alexandria, on the banks of the Mediterranean. After three delightful days spent with him, we arrived here last night, and have been sight-seeing all the morning,

* See Appendix A, page 303.

till we are positively gorged with mosques, and bazaars, and Eastern wonders. I am not going to enter into particulars, suffice it to say that Egypt surpasses our most sanguine expectations. The 'Arabian Nights' pale before the reality, and Cairo is the *ne plus ultra* of all that is picturesque and romantic. It is a perpetual carnival from morning to night. To-morrow we are off to the Pyramids, and on Sunday commence our voyage up the Red Sea.

"A provoking circumstance has just happened. Sir Philip Francis has been most pressing in his endeavours to induce us to play one night for the Viceroy, in the private theatre attached to the palace; and, alas! all my things—books, parts, and dresses—are gone on to Melbourne. Wasn't this a pity? I should have liked it of all things; and, as there is a French company here, it could easily have been arranged, and there would have been a feather in my cap—something to remember for the rest of one's days. I am truly sorry to have missed the chance.

"Faithfully yours,

"C. J. MATHEWS."

From Suez the party proceeded in the *Deccan* to Ceylon, and thence in the *Geelong* to Melbourne. The voyage was prosperous and uneventful, as prosperous voyages are apt to be, and except that Mathews "kept his hand in" on board the *Deccan* by a performance of

"Cool as a Cucumber" and "Patter v. Clatter," the log has little interest.

Melbourne was reached on March 25th, and if there had been any lingering doubts as to the ultimate success of the enterprise, the manner of the reception must have been as reassuring as it undoubtedly was gratifying. "He was received with almost royal honours, and deputations at once waited on him from the principal clubs and public institutions," says a contemporary report. "At the Italian Opera, after the first act of 'Lucrezia Borgia,' the name of Charles Mathews was suddenly called out, when the whole audience rose and gave him an enormous ovation, to which the popular comedian had to respond from the governor's box." The Yorick Club, the members of which were all more or less connected with literature, science, and art, entertained him at dinner on March 28th. The Athenæum Club followed suit two days later,* and private as well as public entertainments of all kinds did honour to the distinguished visitor.

On Saturday, April 9th, Mathews made his first bow to the Melbourne public at the Theatre Royal. The pieces selected were "Married for Money" and "Patter v. Clatter," and the theatre was crammed in every part. The reception which the visitor received, when he stepped on the stage as Mr. Mopus, was enthusiastic and prolonged to an almost unprecedented degree. The roar

* See Appendix A, page 307.

of congratulatory applause broke forth again and again, and it was some minutes before the play could proceed. Heartier welcome no man could wish; and although Mathews had had no intention of addressing the audience, he could not refrain from saying a few words of acknowledgment:

"Ladies and Gentlemen,—I hardly consider that the time for speechifying has yet properly arrived, for of course I can have nothing more to say at present than that I am deeply gratified at the glorious house with which you have inaugurated my engagement, and the delightful welcome you have given me—two very important points, it is true, for a good start is a capital thing we all know; but we must not be in a hurry, we are yet only on the first stage of our journey, and though our pace is good, we have to see whether we can last. We must not begin to compliment each other too soon. We must not judge by one part, or one good house, but wait quietly for what follows. Some people think that when the marriage ceremony is over happiness is ensured for life, and yet get tired of each other before the honeymoon is out. I hope this may not be our case. I trust that our acquaintanceship may not prove, like Cobb's coach, agreeable for the first ten miles, but rather tiresome after two hundred. All I can say is, that as long as you continue to come I will endeavour to supply you with novelties, and I promise you that your amusement shall not flag from the score

of monotony. I have plenty of material, and if you but relish the kind of commodity I have to offer you I think we may look forward to many pleasant evenings together. Meantime allow me to assure you that nothing can be more sincere than the thanks I tender you for the gratification I have received to-night. Your kindness to me has been far beyond my most sanguine expectations, and has given the crowning touch to the charming reception I have met with on all hands from the very first moment of my arrival in Melbourne. Ladies and gentlemen, once more I return you my most grateful thanks."

Although, of course, there was no difference of opinion as to the merits of Mathews's acting among those competent to judge, there appears to be no doubt that some measure of disappointment was felt among his most enthusiastic partisans at the rather modified success which was secured by his early appearances in Melbourne. The houses at first were not so great as had been anticipated. It was some little time before the full tide of success began to flow. Several reasons were put forward by local critics for this state of things. It was asserted that the choice of the opening piece was injudicious, and that it would have been wiser to select some part more widely identified with the actor's fame. It was held that Sir Charles Coldstream or Mr. Affable Hawk would have been stronger cards to play than Mr. Mopus. Another theory was that the actor's

style was too refined and gentlemanly to suit the pit and gallery—the main supporters of theatres all over the world—and that this view had considerable reason on its side, and that the feeling went even a little farther, is amply shown by a story that has been told by an intimate friend of Mathews who was present on the occasion. Two Collins Street critics were discussing the merits of the new-comer in the lobby between the acts. "Well, what do you think of it?" asked one. "Why, I don't like him half as much as the old man," was the answer, in a surprised and rather aggrieved tone. "He don't act a bit. He is just like a gentleman walking about a drawing-room." The "old man" was Mr. W. Hoskins, who may still be remembered by old playgoers as a member of Mr. Phelps's Sadler's Wells Company. In Islington his line was the legitimate and the tragic. On migrating to the Antipodes he appears to have thought it desirable to assume a totally different style of acting, and became a light comedian, playing all Charles Mathews's parts with great success, and securing a large measure of public favour. Therefore Mathews was in the odd predicament of not presenting an original version of his own original parts, and the real article ran some danger of depreciation by comparison with that which had been already presented in its place.* The fact of

* That this state of things was not at all unexpected by Mathews himself the following letter will show:

"Married for Money" not having been included in Mr. Hoskins's *répertoire* may have had some influence with Mathews in the arrangement of the bill for the first night.

One more reason for the coolness of a portion, at least, of the public, refers to a grievance which has often influenced the fortunes of theatres. The prices to the gallery, pit, and stalls were raised—much against the wish and advice of the management it is understood.

"25, Pelham Crescent, Brompton,
"December 11th, 1869.

"MY DEAR MR. COPPIN,

"To my great surprise I have just heard that you are joint lessee in the Melbourne Theatres with Mr. Harwood, to whom I have written announcing my approaching visit to Australia, and engagement, through your agent Mr. Poynter, at the Theatre Royal. I begged him to convey to you a message from me; but I feel that something more is required, since it turns out that you are to be one of my future managers; and more especially as, when we met in London some years ago, I so positively refused to listen to your allurements. Well, at last I have made up my mind, and have overcome the scruples of my wife, to undertake the voyage. Still, I tell you frankly, I don't like it. I am an awful bad sailor, and the distance is appalling; but I am fond of travel and have a real anxiety to see Australia, the accounts of which are charming enough to tempt anyone to its shores; and when at the same time profit can be added to pleasure of course the temptation is doubled. But, as I told Mr. Harwood, I shall expect to be made much of, and look to you to realise all the bright visions you have held out to me. I count on your assurance that I shall find myself among friends ready to give me a cordial reception, and that I shall fancy myself as completely at home in Melbourne as in Piccadilly. In fact, I shall walk

There is no doubt that this proceeding caused considerable irritation, and that it was the real cause of any little disappointment or unpleasantness which arose is likely enough. Mathews argued the point with his usual good temper and adroitness in a letter to the *Melbourne Argus*, but practically admitted that he was in the wrong by allowing prices to remain in their normal condition on his return visit to Melbourne.*

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down to the theatre the first night with as much tranquillity as if I were strolling to my accustomed duties at the Haymarket or the Olympic. Without this confidence in the kindness of the audience whose acquaintance I am going to make, believe me no question of money could induce me to quit the favour of a long-tried and valued public at home; and lovely as Australian nuggets may be, I would stick to my mutton-chop among old friends, and never sigh for the 'flesh-pots of Egypt.'

"I have had many misgivings as to whether my style of acting would be acceptable among strangers, most of my pieces having been acted and overacted before your audiences; but your experience is of course what I chiefly rely upon, and I am ready to risk the experiment. It will be like beginning my profession anew, and making my 'first appearance' again. Who knows but I may be seized with stage-fright! Never mind, I'll do my best at any rate, and trust, as we say technically, to 'meet with the usual indulgence.' My soul's in arms and eager for the fray! I am in fine order for the encounter, and I feel that now or never is the time. So look out for me, and wish me 'good-luck.'

"Faithfully yours,

"C. J. MATHEWS."

* Irritation at high prices has frequently been shown by playgoers, but it is very rare to find anyone anxious to pay more than is asked. A Melbourne admirer of Mathews's was one of these exceptional people.

"TO THE EDITOR OF THE 'MELBOURNE ARGUS.'

"SIR,

"I want to have a little chat with you touching the present prices at the Theatre Royal. You have made one or two allusions to them, and other papers have done the same, and have, I think, unjustly blamed the management for making them so high. First, then, let me take the blame, if blame there be, upon my own

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His letter contained two shillings' worth of postage-stamps, and was dated April 28, 1870:

"To Charles Mathews, Esq.

"PEARLS BEFORE PIGS.

"MY DEAR SIR,

"Having been stuck in Melbourne for the last twenty years, like to Simeon Stylites upon a pedestal, I was scarcely prepared to see such an entertainment as that now given at the Royal. What I had heard from others gave me no idea of what I saw and heard last night in the three pieces then played. I am ashamed to say that I went to the pit and paid two shillings only for what was worth any money to those who would know what the actor's art really is. Private theatricals are prevalent. Let those who think acting an easy matter go to the Theatre Royal and see easy acting, and find out afterwards how hard it is to go and do likewise. See 'How the actor's mighty art illusion perfect triumph gives; how the painting no longer is motionless, and how the sculpture lives.' I was suffering from low spirits, biliousness, and inertia, but came out quite a new man—all the circulation accelerated by healthy merriment. As folks send omitted moneys to the Chancellor of the Exchequer, I beg to do similarly, and enclose the balance of cash that I ought to have paid to go to the stalls, viz., two shillings, as

"'CONSCIENCE MONEY.'"

shoulders (for the management has had literally nothing to do with the arrangement), and just let me give you my view of the matter. With what the prices were before I came I have nothing to do. I only look to my own side of the question. My visit to Melbourne is, in plain terms, a commercial speculation—no one, I presume, gives me credit for anything beyond this; and delighted as I am to have had the opportunity of seeing this most interesting country, I don't attempt to conceal the fact that the temptation held out to me to make the voyage has been—money. Now to give me a certain amount, a certain amount must be taken; and if the prices are such as to give me less than I can quietly make at home, I candidly confess that I should have preferred remaining there. Why should I risk £1,000 (my expenses out being £500, and £500 my return) on the venture? Why use six months of the year on the voyage, backwards and forwards, and the various unavoidable delays, when I could be earning a large sum weekly at home? The answer is simple and evident—because I hope to make more money in the twelvemonth here than I could make in the twelvemonth there. Then what are my chances of doing so? Certainly not by playing to half the prices I do in London. At the Haymarket, Drury Lane, and other theatres at which I am in the habit of performing, the prices are higher than those now demanded here. The stalls are 7s., while here they are 4s.; the dress circle 5s. as here; the upper

circle 4s., while here it is 3s.; the pit 2s.; the gallery 1s. If, then, I am to make more in six months in Australia than I can do in twelve in England (for this is what I must do before I can be said to make a farthing extra, independent of the positive outlay of £1,000, three months' work lost, and double expenses in all ways), I repeat, can this be done by dropping the prices to half the amount I can command elsewhere? If you will live 'so far out of town,' you must take the consequences and expect to pay more for imported articles than those who live nearer, and if you want to entice people sixteen thousand miles from their home, it cannot be done by offering them less than they can make where they are. I buy a box of vesuvians in England for 1d.; here I have to pay 3d. A bottle of French blacking costs me in Paris half a franc, in London 6d.; in Melbourne they charge me 2s. 6d., and this increase pervades all other imported articles. Well, I am an imported article, and why should I be treated worse than a box of vesuvians or a bottle of blacking? After all, in what do we differ from the Princess's? Can anyone witness the performance there for less than 1s.? No! Then why should they witness ours for 6d.? Where's the grievance? I haven't heard that any objection has been raised by those who do come, and I don't see why they should be told that they are ill-used. Last night, for instance (leaving the dress circle out of the question, as the prices there have not

been meddled with), 894 persons paid their 2s. to the pit—some 50 of whom afterwards voluntarily put down another 1s. to exchange to the upper circle; 400 paid to the stalls; 265 to the upper circle; and 500 to the gallery; and from the hearty jollity of the audience I cannot conclude that they repented the price they had paid for their amusement. Why, then, persuade these good people that they are injured? 'Chacun cherche son plaisir où il le trouve!' and if they are happy why tell them that they ought to be miserable? 'But,' I am told, 'the playgoing population of Melbourne is limited, and the same people go over and over again to see the same piece, which they cannot afford to do at high prices.' Very good. Let the pittite who would pay ten times at 1s. (I don't believe he would pay) pay five times at 2s., and it will bring it to the same thing. He will spend no more, and if all the playgoers in Melbourne will do the same I shall be perfectly satisfied. At all events, when Mr. Charles Kean played here the prices were doubled and no one grumbled; and if Mario or Patti were to pay you a visit, I feel convinced that they would not be expected to receive less than is cheerfully paid them in London or St. Petersburg. Am I then ununreasonable in thinking that the prices at the Theatre Royal ought not to be gauged by what they have been on ordinary occasions, and without what are called 'stars,' and that those who are fond of astronomy should

be allowed to indulge in the luxury of paying a little more for the use of the telescope ?

"I am, Sir,

"Your obedient Servant,

"CHARLES MATHEWS.

"April 19th, 1870."

In Melbourne Mathews played most of his best-known parts, appearing in "Used Up," "Mr. Gatherwool," "The Critic," "If I had £1,000 a year," "Cool as a Cucumber," "Little Toddlekins," "The Liar," "The Bachelor of Arts," "Patter v. Clatter," "Trying It On," "Aggravating Sam," &c. ; and with Mrs. Mathews in "Black Sheep," "The Golden Fleece," "A Lesson in Love," "A Comical Countess," concluding with "London Assurance." After a flying visit to Ballarat, the tour was continued to Sydney. Here again, oddly enough, the engagement did not begin so prosperously as had been expected, although the ultimate result was quite satisfactory, and it was reserved for Adelaide to be the first city to answer the full expectations of the travellers, Mathews declaring at a supper at the Union Club that, in proportion to the population, the receipts in the capital of Southern Australia had surpassed those of either Melbourne or Sydney. There was, however, no mistake about the business on the return visit to Melbourne. Crowded houses and enthusiastic applause testified to the strong hold the

popular comedian had obtained upon the sympathies and even affection of the public, and the parting was sincerely regretted on both sides. "A new era in the dramatic history of these colonies will date from the visit of Mr. Charles Mathews," says a colonial writer. "He has been received everywhere, almost without exception, with enthusiasm. The result of his performances cannot fail to display itself in the communication of a better tone to the colonial stage. . . . The dramatic public regard it as a privilege to have had him amongst us."

What Mathews himself thought of his colonial experiences may be gathered from his speech on Dec. 23rd, 1870, when Mrs. Mathews took her farewell benefit in Melbourne:

"The time for our leaving the colonies has arrived, and I must sum up the result of our long stay in them. The result has been unalloyed satisfaction. Perfect pleasure, combined with plenty of profit. I can safely say that I have never anywhere passed a more agreeable time either at home or abroad, before or behind the curtain, or sojourned in more enjoyable places, graced by more friendly and polite people of every grade. I say emphatically of every grade; for certainly one of the most striking features in the colonies generally is the unaffected civility and kindness manifested everywhere by the intelligent working classes. I can truly assert that I have never met with anything like it

elsewhere. Don't think I am flattering, ladies and gentlemen. Remember I have now nothing to gain by it. I have no benefit to take, that is over; and as it is most unlikely that I shall ever have the privilege of seeing you here again, I need not butter you up to ensure myself a good reception on my next visit. No, I am simply speaking the truth. We came a long way to see, as we supposed, a foreign country; instead of which we found ourselves at once at home, and as if among old friends; and sincerely do I regret that the time has come to bid them good-bye. We were induced to believe that we should find nothing here we required, and brought with us a shipload of boxes which we might just as well have left at home, for I know nothing that can be got in London that cannot be got in Melbourne—except, perhaps, a good November fog. . . . As to our success, we have nothing but the most grateful thanks to offer, for it has been quite equal to our hopes everywhere; and though we had a little tiff about the prices at starting, you yielded to me with a good grace on our first engagement, and I have yielded to you on our second, and I think we are all well satisfied —at any rate, *we* are."

After the farewell at Melbourne, a return visit was made to Sydney, where the reception was again all that could be desired; and from Sydney, on January 31, 1871, a start was made for New Zealand and San Francisco.

The story of the private life and of the travelling difficulties of this tour has been admirably told by Mathews himself, in the following letters, which have already appeared in the columns of *The Era*, and are reprinted by permission of Mr. Ledger:

"I took my berth to Melbourne, and said to everybody in a jaunty sort of way, 'I am going to Australia,' just as I had often said, 'I am going to the Continent, or to America, or to Switzerland,' for in my simplicity I thought that, on landing at Melbourne, I was *there*, and the thing was done—but I soon found out my mistake. That I was at Melbourne was true, but as to my being *there*—that is, in Australia—I mean in the same sense that, on arriving at Paris, I should be in France, or at New York, in America, there was not the slightest similitude. I found at once that I was only in Victoria, and that Sydney, Adelaide, Brisbane, Hobart Town, and Auckland involved separate voyages, necessitating most disagreeable and tempestuous trips in small steamers, of from four to five days to a week in each place, and that South Australia, New South Wales, Tasmania, New Zealand, Queensland, &c. &c., were as much apart as if they were countries altogether independent of each other. This was a blow. I thought after our voyage of sixteen thousand miles, that we had arrived, and had only to visit various cities, at short distances from each other, as I should pass from one provincial town to another in England. The fact is,

that never having any idea of going to Australia at all, and feeling no interest in the matter, I had never taken the trouble to inquire anything about it, and clubbed in my mind all these towns as lying somewhere together at convenient distances. I now found that, so far from being in any way united, these various places were not only five or six hundred miles apart, but were separated in every other conceivable way, under different governments, jealous of each other, and as divided in feeling, in manners, and in prospects as though they were foreign countries, having no sympathies in common. Now this was an awful discovery, for if there is one thing that I detest more than another it is the sea. To lie upon the beach on a hot summer's day and contemplate it, is delightful; to gaze upon the lovely blue Mediterranean from the heights of Spezia, with its pretty little white latine sails dotting it in the bright sun, is heavenly; but once get on it, and the charm vanishes. The calm Mediterranean indeed! Such a night as we had on leaving Marseilles will make it hateful to me for the rest of my life. Talk of the Bay of Biscay—a millpond. Try the Gulf of Lyons! And here it was again to do, after we thought we had reached our destination. Disgusting, too, to hear the cool way in which these trips were talked of. After three months at Melbourne, people said: 'You go to Sydney next, I suppose?' 'Yes, how far is it?' 'Oh, not more than five hundred miles. The boat runs over in three days

and nights.' Only three days and nights, and always a rough passage! Why, before now, I have stopped three days and nights at Dover rather than encounter a rough passage of two hours to Boulogne or Calais. But it had to be done, and so it was of no use repining, and we did it. The next engagement, after a couple of months in Sydney, was at Adelaide, only a thousand miles or so, three days and nights back to Melbourne, and ditto from Melbourne to Adelaide, wind, of course, smack in our teeth, heavy sea, boat rolling and pitching all the way. After five weeks at Adelaide, back again to Melbourne, only five hundred miles this time—a mere ferry; but lest it should be too pleasant, the regular steamer was laid up for repairs, and a small coaster, taking double the time, was substituted. I tried to postpone my next engagement for a week in order to catch the regular boat, but as that could not be done, we had to take our chance, and a pretty chance it was. Boat crowded to suffocation, passengers lying about on the floors and tables, awful weather, and dozens of sick women and squalling babies. The only break in our misery was on the second day. Early in the morning we entered Robe Bay, and were informed we might go ashore for eight or nine hours. As the day was tolerably fine after the tempestuous night, we got into a boat crammed with fellow-passengers, and through a heavy swell, were landed at Robe, a village consisting of a few straggling houses on the beach, but possessing

a substantial jetty. As we were promised plenty of kangaroos, and parrots, and cockatoos, we took our guns, hired a trap, and started off about seven miles in the bush, where we spent the day, and got capital sport. But—always a but—we, of course, took a wrong course, lost our way for hours in the bush, and found ourselves at last about six miles away from the place where we had left the trap. Dragging our kangaroos further was out of the question, we were only just able to drag our own weary limbs through bogs and briers, arriving barely in time to drive back to the jetty and hear the bell ring from the vessel to summon all on board. Meantime the wind had got up, and the boat, now fuller than ever, was tossed about the side of the ship, where the 'arm-chair,' as it was called (being a tub with ropes attached to it), hauled us up on the deck again.

"It is true that from Adelaide to Melbourne there was an alternative, Cobb's coach, a long waggon with leather curtains, drawn by four almost unbroken horses, taking four or five days and nights, jolting through self-made tracks, over fallen branches and deep muddy holes, and stopping after each 'bad pass' for the coachman to ask the suggestive question of 'All aboard?' before proceeding. Bad as the boat was, it was better than this.

"We have still a few more thousand miles of agreeable sea voyages before we shall have accomplished Tasmania and New Zealand. 'You go to New Zealand, of course?

'Of course. From Sydney to Auckland is, I believe, the nearest route. How far is it?' 'A little under thirteen hundred miles.' 'Oh, is that all?' 'You must not fail to go to Dunedin; you will do well there.' 'How far from Auckland?' 'About a thousand miles—only a week's voyage; but it's a nasty coast.' 'Thank you; I'm sure I shall enjoy it.' 'Hokitika will pay well also' (about another thousand miles), 'but you must take care to get a good boat, as the reefs there are very dangerous.' 'Oh, that's nothing; the pleasure of having one's letters addressed "Theatre Royal, Hokitika," would be something, and we should be on our way back to Auckland.' 'Exactly—not more than, say, five days' (another thousand miles). And so on, and so on. After New Zealand, to be sure it is only a short trip of ten thousand to San Francisco, taking about thirty-six days for the voyage; and then, after a tour in the United States, I hope, with the exception of the paltry three thousand more of sea from New York to Liverpool, we shall have a month or two on dry land, and shall get to London without the aid of Cobb's coach.

"I don't expect anyone to take much interest in these few straggling lines; and people who have made up their minds to remain quietly at Brompton or Hampstead for the rest of their lives may dismiss them from their minds, if they have taken the trouble to read them; but to any misguided young (wild) men and women who are contemplating a professional tour in

Australia, and, being bad sailors, look forward to Melbourne as the end of their sufferings, perhaps the few hints I have given may not be altogether thrown away."

"We left Australia on the 31st January, 1871—the same day on which, twelve months ago, we left Marseilles for Australia. We sailed in the *Wonga Wonga* (which in the Maori language means pigeon), and reached New Zealand, for coaling purposes, in six days and six hours —one thousand, three hundred and two miles (please be particular about the two miles, nothing like accuracy)— head winds, of course, all the way; the longest passage, of course, ever known. We landed at Auckland on Monday, February 6th, at twelve o'clock at night; four hours too late, of course, to play. I suggested to the manager a morning performance, and he jumped at the idea, got his advertisement in the paper, issued his bills and posters, putting the prices at seven-and-sixpence, and the next day I played 'Used Up' and 'Cool as a Cucumber,' at eleven o'clock in the morning, to a crowded house, concluded at half-past one, and sailed for the Sandwich Islands at two in the *Moses Taylor*, familiarly, but by no means vulgarly, entitled the *Rolling Moses*. Reached Honolulu, the capital of the island of Oahu, and the seat of government of the Hawaiian group, on Saturday the 18th—twelve days—four thousand and thirteen miles and three-quarters (accuracy

again, exact as an architect's estimate—£4000 1s. 3¾d.) Head winds, of course, all the way; longest passage, of course, ever known, and certainly the weariest. Heavy rolling seas, not a sail, a bird, or a fish sighted; the only excitement we had arising from the novelty of two Thursdays coming together in one week, two 9ths of February arm-in-arm. At Honolulu, one of the loveliest little spots upon earth, I acted one night by command, and in the presence of his majesty Kamehameha V., king of the Sandwich Islands (not Hoky Poky Wanky Fum, as erroneously reported), and a memorable night it was. On my way to the quaint little Hawaiian theatre, situated in a rural lane, in the midst of a pretty garden, glaring with gaudy tropical flowers, and shaded by cocoa-palms, bananas, banyans, and tamarinds, I met the playbill of the evening. A perambulating *Kanaka* (or black native gentleman), walking between two boards (called in London figuratively a sandwich-man, but here, of course, literally so), carried aloft a large illuminated white paper lantern, with the announcement in the Kanaka language, to catch the attention of the coloured inhabitants: 'Charles Mathews, *keska keia po* (theatre open this evening). *Ka uno o ke komo ana* (reserved seats, dress circle), 2 dols. 50 c.; *nohi uma* (*parquette*), 1 dol.; *noho hop* (Kanaka, pit), 75 c.' I found the theatre, to use the technical expression, crammed to suffocation, which merely means very full; though, from the state of the

thermometer on this occasion, suffocation was not so incorrect a description as usual. A really elegant-looking audience (tickets 10s. each), evening dresses, uniforms of every cut and country, chiefesses and ladies of every tinge, in dresses of every colour, flowers and jewels in profusion, satin playbills, fans going, windows and doors all open; an outside staircase leading straight into the dress circle, without either check-taker or money-taker. Kanaka women in the garden below selling bananas and pea-nuts by the glare of flaming torches on a sultry tropical moonlight night. The whole thing was like nothing but a midsummer night's dream. And was it nothing to see a pit full of Kanakas, black, brown, and whitey-brown (till lately cannibals), showing their white teeth, grinning, and enjoying 'Patter v. Clatter' as much as a few years ago they would have enjoyed the roasting of a missionary or the baking of a baby? It was certainly a page in one's life never to be forgotten. On Wednesday, March 1st, we left Honolulu for California in the *Moses Taylor*, and on the tenth day heard the sea-lions bark outside the Heads, and, steaming through the Golden Gate, landed at San Francisco on Sunday the 12th—only ten days—two thousand and ninety miles (without mentioning the odd three inches, which, no doubt, ought to be added to the calculation); as pleasant a voyage, for a voyage, as could be desired; head winds, &c. &c. &c., of course, as usual; thus completing the distance from Sydney, seven

thousand, four hundred and five miles and three-quarters (to say nothing of the possible extra three inches), in thirty-four days, averaging a rate of about eight knots and a quarter an hour throughout. It might have been better, but as it might have been (and frequently has been) considerably worse, we are truly grateful to have reached so prosperously the end of our voyage. We arrived here yesterday, and I play the day after to-morrow, so you see I am not losing more time than I can help on the road."

From San Francisco to New York was a mere step after all the travelling that had been already got through.* In April, Mathews again appeared before a New York audience, at the Fifth Avenue Theatre, in "Married for Money" and "Patter v. Clatter." There was an overflowing audience, and it was several minutes before the applause which greeted his appearance allowed him to proceed. The engagement, which lasted six weeks, was most successful, and, in his address to the public at its conclusion, Mathews gracefully referred to his previous visits to the States:

"It is thirteen years since I paid my last visit to America, and thirty years since I made my first bow

* A telegram received in San Francisco, shortly after Mathews's arrival, offered two nights at Salt Lake City, "Terms—share nightly, after two hundred dollars, reserving two proscenium boxes and seats occupied by President Young's family in *parquette*." The last reservation is rather alarming.

before a New York audience, and here I am, still playing the same parts before the sons and daughters that I then played before the fathers and mothers, and, if I may judge by my success, affording them even a greater amount of amusement than I did their parents. Now this is a most gratifying fact—gratifying, because it is a proof that my labours have not been expended in a wrong direction. . . . I have been very fortunate in having been able to appear before you at the Fifth Avenue Theatre. It is a house exactly suited for the style of pieces I play, and the style of acting I prefer, and, above all, frequented by those intellectual and refined audiences for whose amusement alone it has always been my pride and pleasure to cater. . . ."

Several months were occupied after this in a tour of the United States and Canada,* with results in every way satisfactory, and it was not until June, 1872, that Mathews turned his face homewards. On June 1st he took his final farewell of an American audience at Wallack's Theatre, New York, playing Sir Simon Simple in Mr. Byron's comedy, "Not such a Fool as he Looks," and summing up the result of his two years' absence from home in a few genial parting words.†

* See Appendix A, page 311. † See Appendix A, page 317.

CHAPTER VII.

LAST YEARS, 1872-1878.

On his return to London, Mathews accepted an engagement from Mr. Hollingshead at the Gaiety Theatre, and made his reappearance there, after his long absence from home, on Monday, October 7, 1872, in "A Curious Case" and "The Critic." "His reception," says Mr. Hollingshead, "was the most enthusiastic burst of feeling I ever witnessed or can imagine." The engagement lasted ten weeks, Mathews playing most of his best parts, such as "Used Up," "Married for Money," "Cool as a Cucumber," "The Game of Speculation," and so on, and was both artistically and commercially a brilliant success.

A second engagement was arranged for five weeks, beginning May 26th, 1873; and a third followed in September 29, when the bill of the play included "The Game of Speculation" and "Mr. Gatherwool." "Patter v. Clatter" and "Married for Money" brought this series of performances to a close on November 1.

In the following month the engagement of a specially strong company gave Mathews the opportunity of

resuming the part of the Hon. Tom Shuffleton in "John Bull," which he had not played for many years, and which he only played now with considerable reluctance, although the comedy was only put up for three nights. In the summer of 1874 he was again at the Gaiety, and in the autumn of 1875 produced, for the first time in London, his own original comedy—it is well to recollect that he was now seventy-two—of "My Awful Dad."

The gaps between these London engagements were filled up by country tours. Mathews was not a man to sit down and fold his hands, if he wanted rest. His idea of rest was only change of work. He frequently declared that work was necessary to him, and that he should die in harness, and the result was to show that he was right. He was, indeed, an indefatigable worker. Up to the very last he played in two parts almost every night, carrying out the traditions of his earlier days, when the amount of work that he got through would astonish some of the comedians of to-day, who are exhausted with the fatigues of a three-act comedy, even without constant rehearsals and the cares and anxieties of a manager burdened with debt and hopeless responsibility. No amount of stage work ever seemed to come amiss to him. That he should have been playing in three pieces nightly at the Olympic in 1836 is, perhaps, natural enough. He was a young actor and wanted practice, as well as to keep himself well before the eyes of the public. A reference to old playbills shows

him playing Charles Surface, and in "He would be an Actor," at Covent Garden. "Patter v. Clatter," "You can't marry your Grandmother," and "One Hour," are included in a Haymarket bill of the following year. Captain Smoke in "Bubbles of the Day," and Charles Surface were followed on the next evening, in 1842, by the curiously different and comparatively insignificant part of Fag in "The Rivals." Marplot in "The Busybody," and Sir Charles Coldstream; "The Confederacy," and "A Model for a King;" "Time works Wonders," and Planché's extravaganza of "The Golden Fleece," appear in the lists of his evening's work about this time. And it was not as if the night's work and the morning's rehearsals were all he had to do. There is something pathetic in his evidence before the Commissioner in Bankruptcy in 1844, the immediate point being whether in his position it was an extravagance to keep a carriage. First, in the morning, he said, "he had to be present by eleven o'clock at rehearsal, when he stayed probably till two o'clock; then he, with Mrs. Mathews and servants, had to go to make purchases for their wardrobe, then hurry and scurry to get back for a three o'clock dinner, then to the theatre by half-past four o'clock for performance, after which, from fatigue, it was necessary they should have a conveyance home. He could assure the court he had little rest, for in the midst of all this he had to do his best to stop the mouths of two thousand pounds' worth of creditors at sixty per cent. For the last

five or six years he could truly say that the only place of study for his very best parts was a hack cab. In one instance he was up at a quarter to seven o'clock in the morning, in a cab, studying his part, on the road to negotiate with a creditor." At the Lyceum it was even worse. In 1848 he was playing in "Anything for a Change," "Court Beauties," and "The Critic"—four parts, as he doubled Sir Fretful Plagiary and Puff in the last-named, on the same evening. Next year's round shows three two-act pieces on the same night: "A Lady in Difficulties," "Follies of a Night," and "Used Up;" while "Cool as a Cucumber," "A Day of Reckoning" (three acts), and the extravaganza "The Queen of the Frogs," make another liberal bill. When "The Chain of Events" was running, Mathews played in nine acts, eight of them in Lewis's play, and one in "Taking by Storm." Nowadays, playing the public in and playing them out are not considered desirable occupations by leading or "star" actors—still less if they happen to be their own managers. But in 1853, when the burlesque was the principal feature in the bill at the Lyceum, we find the manager "playing them in" in "A Phenomenon in a Smock Frock," and "playing them out" in "Little Toddlekins." Next year's burlesque was preceded by "The Bachelor of Arts," and followed by "Patter v. Clatter." At Drury Lane, "Married for Money" was played before the spectacle of "Nitocris," in 1855, and, the same year, Mathews appeared in two three-act

comedies, "Married for Money" and "The Game of Speculation," on the same night. It is melancholy to think of the depressing influences under which all this work was done, and of the little permanent result it had.

In November, 1875, another journey was undertaken. A flying visit to India varied the monotony of everyday work, and Mathews played a brief engagement in Calcutta, on one special night appearing before the Prince of Wales and a wonderful houseful of Maharajahs. In 1876 he was back again at the Gaiety, and after a long country tour fulfilled his last London engagement—still under Mr. Hollingshead's management—at the Opera Comique, the Gaiety being temporarily occupied by a French company. His last appearance in London was in "The Liar" and "The Cosy Couple," on Saturday, June 2nd, 1877. "The result of these eight engagements," Mr. Hollingshead says, "was eminently satisfactory to both of us. The gross receipts were nearly £40,000, out of which he received more than £10,000 for playing about 354 times. Our business, what little we had, was transacted in the most pleasant manner possible. There was no fuss, no squabbling, and no agreements; he took my word and I took his, and no engagement during my ten years of management, apart from the question of profit and loss, has given me more personal gratification."

All the work he went through in these later years seemed only to make him brisker and more lively than

ever, and even the somewhat frequent fits of gout which afflicted him had but little effect upon his cheery and genial temperament.

The early chapters of these volumes give some insight into Mathews's character and habit of mind, through his correspondence as well as through his autobiography. A few letters of his septuagenarian days may be given here, not as illustrating, as some of the earlier letters did, facts necessary to the story of his life, but simply to show that age could not wither that freshness and sprightliness which were always his leading characteristics on or off the stage.

The first that comes to hand is dated, indeed, a year before the actual attainment of the "seventies," and is written to Mr. Edmund Yates, the son of Mathews's partner in the Adelphi Theatre nearly forty years before. It would seem that the recipient of the letter found his correspondent's handwriting somewhat puzzling:

"Hôtel d'Angleterre, Nice, January 28th, 1873.

"MY DEAR EDMUND,

"I was delighted and surprised at receiving a letter in Arabic from, as I supposed, our old Cairo dragoman Hamit, but on deciphering the commencement and discovering it unmistakably to be 'My dear Charley,' I began to think I must be in error, as I never remember his having addressed me so familiarly

before; and, as on referring to the date and address I clearly made out 'Bancroft House,' I exclaimed at once, 'How stupid I am! of course it's from Marie Wilton! and yet, when did she move to Cat Sapient Milk?' Turning to the signature (as I ought to have done at first), the mystery was solved, and I immediately set apart five hours for the reading, at the end of which time I had nearly made out every other word, and by dinner-time yesterday had pretty well mastered the contents.

"Well, I *was* glad to receive the letter, I confess. We thought you had forgotten us altogether, and Lizzie actually made observations (I won't repeat them) on your never coming to look us up on our return from the Antipodes. Never mind—she will *fix* you yet—you *shan't* walk up and down and tell your stories, and we *won't* laugh at them if you tell them sitting, and I won't tell you any of mine, nor Lizzie any of hers—there now!

"I'm not going to write you a long letter, so don't you think it. While you are shivering and shaking—snowed up at Cat Sapient Milk—we are basking under sun umbrellas in the midst of orange and lemon groves, palms, olives, and figs, by the side of the turquoise sea, and grudge every moment in the house, with a positive horror of pen and ink. So we'll put off all we have to say till we meet, which, without any nonsense, we both wish may be soon with all our hearts,

for we both love a cordial laugh, and with no one do we get it so well as with jolly old Edmund. With our united loves and good wishes for your success and return,

"Ever faithfully yours,

"C. J. MATHEWS.

"Thanks for photograph, which is XLNT."

In answer to a letter of Mr. Henry Irving, who had probably forgotten the provincial tour, dated 1st April, 1874, and inviting Mathews to dinner on the 12th, came the following letter:

"Jewry's Hotel, Dublin, April 10th, 1874.

"MY DEAR IRVING,

"Your letter being dated the first of April, I thought it was a sell, but it has struck me that, not hearing from me in return, you might perhaps fancy I should be with you on Sunday, so I write to say it cannot be. But why not come to *me?* By leaving after the performance to-morrow night you would get here easily at six o'clock on Sunday morning, eat your Sunday's dinner with me (telegraph by return what you would like) at four o'clock, leave by the boat at seven, travel all night again, and be in town in time for rehearsal on Monday. What do you say? The trip will do you good—only two nights on the road, and the weather so nice; blow you over in no time.

"On second thoughts, I shall order, on the chance, some Blue Rock oysters, a Dublin Bay haddock, some colcannon, and an Irish stew, washed down with Guinness's stout *ad libitum*; if that doesn't tempt you, nothing will. You need bother yourself with no luggage, as you will not have time to change; perhaps an extra pocket-handkerchief and a bottle of eau-de-cologne might be advisable in case you should be *very* sick. I shall be ready with an outside car to meet you at Kingstown. It is better than the railway, as, having little time, you must get as much fresh air as possible.

"I suppose you couldn't get off playing on Monday night—perhaps Bateman mightn't like it—or else you could come to the theatre here on that evening; they have a small but excellent company, and I think you would be pleased.

"Faithfully yours,

"C. J. MATHEWS.

"Mind, it's the Gaiety *I* am at; though, if you preferred it, there is Charlotte Saunders now playing at the Theatre Royal.

"But perhaps you have seen her."

A difference of opinion between the Dramatic Authors' Society and certain provincial managers respecting the fees to be paid for the performance of "My Awful Dad"

led to a reference to Mathews and to two very practical letters from him.

CHARLES J. MATHEWS TO A COUNTRY MANAGER.

"Liverpool, Dec. 19, 1876.

"MY DEAR SIR,

"Excuse my delay in answering your letter. I have been travelling about almost daily since its receipt.

"Though a member of the D. A. S., I have never approved of the rule of withholding new pieces from assessed managers till after the first twelve months of their production in London—the only time when, from their freshness, they would be likely to prove greatly attractive in the country—and I have always placed my pieces on the list as soon as produced, thereby giving assessed managers the privilege of playing them at once, without extra cost, instead of being subjected to the fancy price demanded by the author for the first twelve months. But of course this privilege does not extend to unassessed managers, to whom the right of playing the Society's pieces at all is very properly denied. He must pay in some way, and if he will not be assessed, he cannot complain of having to pay the penalties he has himself elected to incur.

"You say 'you thought the piece was my own property.' Why 'think' when making an engagement? Why not ask the question? You would then have been told that, although certainly my property, it has been

placed on the Society's list, and that consequently, as you were unassessed, you were not in a position to play it without paying the penalties.

"You say subsequently: 'When an actor comes round with an especial piece he is certainly expected to have the right and pay the fees.' 'Expected' is unbusinesslike. His being 'expected' to have it is no proof that he has it, and you are bound to ask the question. Had you done so you would have been told that, being a member of the D. A. S. myself, I had not even the right to play my own pieces contrary to their rules, and consequently could not delegate that right to others.

". . . . You refuse to be assessed. Very well, then, pay some other way, but pay. You want to reverse the old phrase of 'You pays your money and you takes your choice.' You want to take your choice and not pay your money. Lay out, good Bardolph! and depend upon it you will never find yourself a teaspoonful of caudle the worse for it.

"Faithfully yours,

"C. J. MATHEWS."

CHARLES J. MATHEWS TO A COUNTRY MANAGER.

"Liverpool, Dec. 19th, 1876.

"MY DEAR ———,

"I am sorry you did not look in on Sunday. I wanted to show you a letter from the D. A. S., in which

the following phrase is quoted from yours: 'By my engagement with Mr. Mathews he undertakes to find his pieces.'

"Allow me to say that I never undertook anything of the kind. You wrote and named the pieces you wished me to play, and I came and played them. I knew nothing of your arrangements with the D. A. S., and had nothing to do with them. How did you arrange when I played 'My Awful Dad' with you last March? If you are assessed, you can play their pieces—if you are not, you can't. This seems to me beyond dispute, and no authority from me can alter it. If I asked you to give me Palgrave Simpson's* pocket-handkerchief you would probably answer that 'you couldn't do it, as it was not yours to give.' I doubt whether, on your own responsibility, you would authorise me even to wipe my nose with Blanchard Jerrold's cambric. I am similarly situated with regard to the D. A. S. I have no more right to dispose of their pieces than their flannel dickies, no more right to Jerrold's 'Cucumber' than to his coat and waistcoat. I wish I had, for I should then certainly charge you a handsome commission and exact a lumping bonus.

"Provincial managers seem to be suddenly seized with a strange propensity (not altogether unknown to the outer world) for appropriating other people's pro-

* The Secretary to the Dramatic Authors' Society.

perty to their own advantage without corresponding compensation. On what principle are they to play the Society's pieces without in some way paying for them? If you walk off with a tart from a pastrycook's without putting down your money, it is useless for you to excuse yourself to the shopman by saying, 'Mr. Mathews authorised me to take it.' 'Mr. Mathews be blowed,' says the shopman, 'pay me my twopence.'

"You have eaten your tart—Palgrave Simpson is the shopman—pay your twopence.

"Faithfully yours,

"C. J. MATHEWS."

It is difficult to realise the fact that the following cheerful and amusing letter was written during an attack of gout; but, in fact, the same attack of the complaint, which about this time returned with distressing frequency, prevented Mathews from appearing for the benefit of his old friend John Parry, and necessitated an apology in the form of the letter to the manager which was distributed to the audience assembled at the Gaiety:

CHARLES J. MATHEWS TO BLANCHARD JERROLD.

"59, Belgrave Road, Feb. 8th, 1877.

"MY DEAR JERROLD,

"Are you in habits of daily intercourse with anyone who has a front tooth out? I don't include the

crossing-sweeper, because you can easily get rid of him at any time by changing your crossing. Nor do I refer to your wife (if you have one—you have one, by-the-bye), because the woman who would reject painless dentistry, and refuse to have a false tooth put in at the desire of an affectionate husband who is willing to incur the expense (single tooth 5s.—complete set £2, vide adv.), is a fit subject for the Divorce Court, and you could at once get relief from her hiatus by a judicial separation. But I allude to members of your own household, who are necessarily before your eyes from sunrise (if you are up) till midnight (if not gone to bed), and whose society you cannot nor indeed would wish to avoid.

"If, I say, you are so circumstanced, and are not near-sighted, you can feel for me. The tenth shelf of my bookcase (counting from the top), the thirteenth volume (counting from the S.W. by S. corner) displays, and has displayed for months, an awful black gap—an aching void—challenging attention at all hours till it is at last unendurable. How I feel for poor Nature! She abhors a vacuum, but not more than I do, and my home has become a torment to me. When in the provinces my return is embittered by the thought of facing that sombre parallelogram—that darkness visible—and you alone can lighten its Cimmerian gloom.

"A charming party, by the name of, I think, Smith—but don't let me be hasty, I would willingly injure no man—yes, Smith it was—in a moment of

enthusiasm borrowed of me a volume of Madden's 'Life of Lady Blessington,' and (like the ear Prynne lent to justice in the days of the pillory) it has never been returned. Mrs. Jerrold one day, in a gushing access of feminine weakness—perhaps since repented of—told me she had it safe (not the ear, the book). This was a comfort, but, like many other verbal comforts, has brought no relief. Now, can you, will you, in the name of our ancient friendship, soothe my aching eyeballs and enable me to turn my face S.W. by S. once more? You can—you will. Give me back that which not enricheth you but makes me poor indeed. It *is* mine you know (has been yours)—don't let it be slave to thousands. Were it a solitary bantling I wouldn't so much care. I could easily replace it with Fitzball's 'Autobiography,' or Paul Bedford's 'Reminiscences,' but it is the elder of three brothers, formerly bound (half-bound) together by the ties of fond affection, and the family is disunited—the trio is no longer juncta in uno. You are a parent yourself—perhaps have (or have had) gaps, and can appreciate my misery. At any rate take my sad case under your consideration, and restore me my long-lost child—replace the precious diadem on its shelf, and don't keep it any longer in your pocket.

"Faithfully yours,

"C. J. M."

CHARLES J. MATHEWS TO JOHN HOLLINGSHEAD.

"59, Belgrave Road, Feb. 6th, 1877, 4 P.M.

"MY DEAR HOLLINGSHEAD,

"I cannot tell you how disappointed I am at not being able to assist at the benefit of my dear old friend John Parry to-morrow. I should have been delighted to put my best leg forward. But alas! at this moment I have no one leg that is better than the other. That agreeable complaint, so airily spoken of by those who never had it, as 'a touch of the gout,' has knocked me off my pins altogether. Your gout is a sad enemy to light comedy (we young light comedians are only men after all), and how could I, in the character of Puff, talk to Sneer and Dangle of my 'hopping and skipping about the stage with my usual activity,' while hobbling on by the aid of a stick? (I have sometimes been badly supported, even by two.)

"It is the first time I ever disappointed the public on a similar occasion, and only comfort myself with the reflection that I shall not be missed among so many; and that, after all, so that the illustrious John be in good form, the audience will be amply gratified, and pardon my unavoidable absence.

"I need not wish Parry success—one who has never known anything else, and can only envy those who are able once more to witness and enjoy it.

"I send no doctor's certificate. I wish I was

enabled to do so. But if anyone doubts, all the harm I wish him is that he should exchange places with me for four-and-twenty hours.

"Faithfully yours,

"C. J. MATHEWS."

A letter in verse to Mr. Ashby-Sterry, written during the earlier period of the same illness, will be read with interest, both as showing Mathews's unfailing gaiety and indomitable vigour under adverse circumstances, and as a *pendant* to the specimens of his powers as a versifier which have already been given.

CHARLES MATHEWS TO J. ASHBY-STERRY,

In return for his "Boudoir Ballads," Jan. 26, 1877.

A GOUTY EPISTLE, IN FORTY-SEVEN TWINGES.

Many thanks to you, dear Ashby-Sterry,
You have sent me an exquisite treat;
Your Ballads delightful are—very,
Gay, tender, grave, witty, and sweet.

Full of fancy and humour fantastic,
Poetic, melodious, refined;
Not a word that is harsh or sarcastic,
Not a word but is genial and kind.

'Midst all that is sunny and cheerful,
All tempered by taste and by art,
There lurks a slight touch of the tearful,
That goes home at once to the heart.

We are never quite certain at starting
Of the turn to be given to the rest;
Whether doomed to be pained by a parting,
Or suddenly cheered by a jest.

The "Boudoir" in itself is perfection.
What a place for an afternoon tea!
Though the lady, who owns the collection,
Keeps dark, and but lends us the key.

Then there's "Blankton Weir"—charmingly painted,
"Tangle Lock"—sketched with porte-crayon free;
Pretty "May," so deservedly sainted—
All equally lovely to me.

Shall I tell you which, out of the many,
I would fix on as being the best?
No—why should I? In fact, are there any
Which are better at all than the rest?

Perhaps for my own private pleasure,
That sweet "Cradle King's" the most dear,
Commencing with joy beyond measure,
And ending so soon with a tear.

As for all your young bright laughing fancies,
Your "Lucys," your "Pearls," and your "Loos,"
Your "Beaties," your "Ethels," your "Nancies,"
I don't know at all which to choose.

There is nothing of mischief or evil;
And—what's worth remark as we pass—
There is never once found the word "devil;"
Not a hint at a snake in the grass.

Even "Angel" is doomed to exclusion,
A word that one usually gets
In such constant, such lavish profusion,
From the Poets who beautify "Pets."

Found but once—and it's quite accidental—
In the ballad you name "Number One;"
Nor there in a sense sentimental,
Only used for the sake of the pun.

There are none of the old commonplaces,
Mythology's not in your way;
No "Venuses," "Cupids," or "Graces"—
All's fresh as the newly-mown hay.

No "Gods" claim the maid you're addressing,
No "Goddesses" envy her charms;
No "Heav'n" in the waist you are pressing,
No "Paradise Found" in her arms!

Your modes of expression are simple,
Though worded with point and with grace;
You bask in a smile or a dimple,
And breathe amidst flowers and lace.

You've a weakness—don't think me offensive—
When paying your milliner's bills,
You will find it come rather expensive—
You're certainly death upon "frills!"

Then, again, there's a rhyme I object to—
In humble submission I kneel—
Id*eal* you cannot expect to
Rhyme truly with "feel" and with "steel."

For humour and happy expression,
Your "Love-locks" with any may vie;
So quaintly you make the confession,
If Love laughs at locks—so do I!

Like you, we'll all try to be merry,
Or at any rate "cheerfully sad;"
You have hit the right note, Ashby-Sterry,
And ought to be "awfully glad."

You're a little too fond of bewailing
Love passages, long ago past;
Reproaching romances for failing
Which never were likely to last.

How is it you cannot find any
Whose constancy you can recall?
The fact is you spooned on too many,
And sigh that you couldn't have all!

On "Two Christmas Eves" you dwell sadly,
The contrast is all very fine,
But though doubtless you feel it quite badly,
It isn't like *you* to repine.

Would you give up your present enjoyments
To render a Christmas Eve glad?
Is dancing the best of employments?
Would you—just for a waltz—be a lad?

You have joys of your own far more cheery,
These flimsy delights far above;
Why look upon Christmas as dreary,
Because you were once deep in love?

Love, like ev'rything else, blooms and passes,
In this transient beautiful world;
The flag that all others surpasses,
Is struck down as soon as unfurled!

When sorrow is fresh, there's no question
'Tis hard for a fellow to bear,
But just give it time for digestion,
You'll find there's no cause for despair.

No matter how sad the position,
It always brought with it *some* joys;
To foster the "hopeless condition"
Is only the sniv'ling of boys!

More than threescore and ten years I've numbered,
And look on the past as a dream—
When "Loves" have for fifty years slumbered,
To wake them a folly I deem.

I am thirty years older than you are,
But of pleasure can yet take my fill;
Old friends ever honest and true are,
At least—I believe them so still.

I can sup upon cold meats and salads,
Enjoy myself still with the gay;
I can relish your exquisite Ballads,
And feel the old glow at a play!

What more can the youth of to-day do?
They go a good pace—will they last?
I can do almost all the things they do,
And have got what they haven't—the Past!

Old letters, torn sketches, dead flowers,
Perhaps a cracked locket, or bowl,
Now afford me amusement for hours—
They formerly "harrowed my soul."

When fatigued with a walk on my ten toes,
I find that the Present's too fast;
I turn to my garnered mementoes,
And placidly live in the Past.

With a handful of souvenirs pleasant,
To Youth again Memory dives;
I can live in the Past and the Present—
In short—I'm a man of two lives!

Then why keep your old sorrows flowing?
Do as I do—just smile and pass on;
To-day I enjoy what is going,
To-morrow live o'er what is gone.

You have had your "good time"—is it over?
You've revelled in all that is nice,
You've shown us you've long lived in clover;
You can't eat your youthful cake twice!

Cheer up! You are not a John Bunkle;
Don't weep o'er the past like an urn—
No, "Tommy, make room for your uncle,"
'Tis time you gave others a turn.

CODA. P.S.

Your book was a bright ray of sunlight,
Brought into my room from without,
While reading in bed by my one light,
Laid up with a fit of the gout!

As the door closed again on its hinges,
And your pretty new volume was seen,
For the time away went all my twinges,
I was flirting with girls on the green.

Once before, when cut short in my capers,
In bed I'd recourse to your sweets—
In feathers took "Shuttlecock Papers,"
And took "Tiny Travels" in sheets.

And now, shunning drugs that are baleful,
I know what to take when I'm ill,
'Stead of gruel poured down by the pailful,
I swallow a poetry pill!

They need bring me no hot application,
No flannel, no colchicum—Pooh!
The prescription is—"versification"—
The remedy furnished by you.

I ran through your Ballads with pleasure,
I twisted and turned them about;
'Tisn't always that one has the leisure.
After all, there's some good in the gout.

If you'd seen how I waltzed through your pages,
And danced to the music there sung,
You'd have cried, "Gout be hanged! gout for age is—
This is measles, or something quite young!"

Right you are—they have brought the wrong pill here,
They've made a mistake—what a bore!
It's measles, no doubt, that's my ill here—
The gout's for the man at next door!

More ballads—look sharp and indite 'em,
And I shall be happy indeed,
If *you* still continue to write 'em,
As long as *I'm* able to read.

Go on, I say, keep your pen steady;
And, since you can charm away pain,
May *you* have another book ready
When *I* have the "measles" again!

After concluding his engagement at the Opera Comique, in 1878, Mathews started on the provincial tour, which was destined to be his last, with a company under the management of Miss Sarah Thorne. He had already appeared under this lady's auspices, and her account of him is interesting.

"If in ever such delicate health, Charles Mathews always attended rehearsals. After an illness of some

duration he travelled to Canterbury on the day of performance, in February, 1877, rehearsed 'My Awful Dad,' and acted at night with his usual success to a delighted audience. During his tour with my company, I told him one day that I had heard he was only good-tempered when the houses were full. He was then playing to crowded houses. He appeared vexed that such a remark had been made. Later on we had two poor houses. The next day he invited myself and mother for a drive through the Duchess of Edinburgh's grounds at Ashford, remarking: 'There, I am not ill-tempered when business is bad, am I?' It was three months prior to this I had made the remark, and he had not forgotten it.

"Mr. Mathews made most strenuous efforts to act when ill. At Halifax, a few weeks prior to his last illness, he succeeded in reaching the dressing-room in the evening. I saw he was too ill to act, and sent for a doctor. When the medical man saw him, he ordered him to his hotel at once.

"The appearance of the public cheered Mr. Mathews in his old age. His appearance everywhere was hailed with immense enthusiasm."

All went well until June 10th, when Mathews was taken ill. He was to have appeared at Dewsbury on that evening, but a telegram from the Queen's Hotel, Manchester, received in the morning, informed Miss

Thorne that he was not well, and suggested that another piece should be got ready in case of accidents. A letter followed, written apparently with effort, and in a hand very unlike the neat firm writing which was one of his most marked characteristics up to the last. "I was truly sorry to disappoint you," it said, "but illness cannot be helped, and when your doctor tells you that if you go out it will be at the peril of your life, it is time to be cautious. I am better to-night, and may promise to be with you to-morrow without fail."

He never acted again. The date of his last appearance was June 8th, 1878, when he played "My Awful Dad" at Staleybridge, and he survived it but little over a fortnight. For some time he had been in delicate health. A chill caught when driving from Staleybridge to Manchester resulted in bronchitis, and although everything that could be done for the sufferer was done, it was of no avail. On June 24th, in the presence of those he loved best in the world, the eyes of the brilliant comedian closed upon the world in which he had worked so hard, and to the amusement of which he had contributed so largely.

The sacredness of private sorrow may not be disturbed here, but it may be said that it was one of those cases in which even those who knew nothing of the man personally, and who perhaps had but rarely seen him act, felt as if some actual loss had befallen them. The

genuineness of the public sympathy was unmistakable, and when all that was mortal of the vivacious and genial Charles Mathews was laid in the earth at Kensal Green, it was amidst such tokens of general sorrow and regret as follow but few men to the grave. For nearly forty-four years Charles Mathews had been a faithful servant, and even, it may be said, a personal friend of the public. That his memory will be green in the minds of Englishmen so long as there is attraction in brilliant intellectual capacity, and so long as a love for the stage and esteem for its brightest ornaments flourish in a country rich even now in such associations, may not be doubted.

CHAPTER VIII.

MATHEWS AS AN ACTOR.

ALTHOUGH the list of the parts played by Mathews during his theatrical career of over forty years is long and varied, it is to be remarked that his own immediate line of business was really limited. Many of his pieces were built upon the same lines, and presented but one type of character. It was, indeed, often said of him that he played Charles Mathews over and over again, and there is a great deal of truth in the statement. But what a good part it was, and how admirably it was always played! In truth, Mathews came of no school, and founded none. The light and airy manner, the brisk incisiveness, the delicate attention to by-play, the voluble but distinct delivery, the careful observation of character, the watchfulness in all points of detail—so well concealed that every action seemed, to spring spontaneously from the requirements of the moment—all these are matters difficult to describe, but easily and vividly recalled to the minds of those who saw this admirable artist, if even it were only in his later days. And as their description is difficult, if not impossible, so

would their reproduction be. There was, as it were, a personal quality about his acting, which, one felt instinctively, belonged to the man, and could not be caught by anyone else. In a word, he was Charles Mathews, and his style, born with him, died with him. That he occasionally assumed characters quite beyond his range is no doubt true, and that nobody was more quick to perceive the mistake than himself is also certain. In such pieces as "Escaped from Portland," and, in a lesser degree, "Black Sheep," there always seemed to be a lack of personal interest, and the usual impulsive vigour and natural energy of his style gave place to something that was evidently acting and nothing more. It was in such plays as "Used Up," "The Game of Speculation" (and, in his later years, "My Awful Dad"), and in such farces as "Cool as a Cucumber," "Patter v. Clatter," and "Little Toddlekins," that his greatest successes were achieved, and that he was most at home. It is not surprising, therefore, that these were his favourite parts, and that in every engagement he played they recur again and again.

It is not often that a man, and more especially an actor, can be cited as a good judge of himself and of his own work; but in this case we find one of the exceptions. No man ever took his own measure so closely and so well as Mathews. His description of his own style of acting, of the effects he aimed at producing, and of the conditions under which alone he could hope

for complete success, is excellent, and is to be found succinctly stated in three speeches addressed to American audiences, which it will be interesting to quote here.

To a Boston audience he said:

"It is always pleasant to play to full houses and appreciative audiences; but in my case it is doubly gratifying, for when I was in Boston before, during the panic of last winter, I was only able to appear at the Boston Theatre—a splendid building, indeed finer I think than any I have seen in Europe, but manifestly unfit for the light pieces in which I am in the habit of performing — so that, notwithstanding the excellent company engaged there, and the great politeness and attention of my friend, Mr. Barry, I could not but feel that I had no chance of making much impression; while here, in this charming little theatre, with every scenic adjunct and with a capital company also, it would only have been to my own demerits that failure could have been attributed, and therefore the success which has attended my efforts has of course been soothing to my vanity. . . . To the free expression of opinion I never object—nay, I have always courted it —and when a critic really feels that in the characters I perform, and which were originally played by me in London, and even in the pieces written by myself and the meaning of which I may consequently be supposed to understand, that I am inferior to other performers, I can only regret that I should not come up to his standard

of excellence. It is too late for me now to change my style of acting, even were I so inclined. I do not pretend to be a physical force actor, my only aim is the agreeable and the natural; but I wish it to be understood that as far as I go, what I do I do on principle. The part of Dazzle, for instance, which I originally played in London, is, I am told, a failure, and that I do not make half as much of it as other performers have done. This is quite possible. But Dazzle is only a side part in a long comedy, and should occupy a subordinate place in the general composition, and I should as soon think of trying to elevate it into undue importance by exaggeration or buffoonery, as I should think of dragging the carrots and turnips of a Dutch picture so prominently forward as to destroy the effect of the principal figures.

"It has also been urged against me that I always play the same characters in the same way, and that ten years hence I should play the parts exactly as I play them now. This I take as a great compliment. It is a precision which has been aimed at by the models of the profession, which I am proud to follow, and shows, at least, that my acting, such as it is, is the result of art and study, and not that of mere accident."

In the same city on another occasion, the same line was taken:

"Had I brought with me to America a budget of novelties, I should have had less apprehension, but all my pieces having been played so very often in this

country, and by excellent actors too, I naturally felt the disadvantage of fighting against previous impressions, while introducing, perhaps, less striking representations than you had been accustomed to witness. I was especially warned that, in order to please on this side of the Atlantic, it would be necessary to adopt a higher style of colouring than that I had been in the habit of considering correct, and that a little brandy must be put into my light wines to suit the American market. To this advice, however, I did not listen. My object was, not to adulterate my wares in order to curry favour with the false taste of the inconsiderate, but to see whether the style of acting I profess, and which I have espoused on principle, would not find favour in the eyes of the judicious, and I am happy to say that the result has been successful beyond my hopes. It is quite clear that you agree with me, that to excite mere laughter, and obtain what are called 'great effects,' without regard to propriety and consistency, are not the objects to be desired by the artist, nor looked for by the people. The aim of true comedy is to 'hold the mirror up to nature,' and endeavour to create amusement without degenerating into farce or melodrama. It is true, that to those accustomed to see some of the characters I perform more broadly and forcibly represented by other actors, disappointment may have been felt. But I don't despair, even with these, and hope in due time to win them over to my side."

A still more careful and elaborate exposition of the principles and views which governed his art is contained in a speech delivered at Philadelphia, which indeed sums up his aims with singular happiness:

"I cannot but feel that the splendid building in which I have had the honour of appearing before you is far too large for the class of pieces in which I perform, and the style of acting I profess. It is not by forcible declamation and powerful display of action that I hope to win favour in your eyes; and to create mere laughter, without regard to consistency, is not my object. It is by expression of countenance, propriety of delivery, and delicacy of by-play, that I seek to produce effect, all of which are necessarily more or less lost in the magnitude of the house, and I cannot but regret that a smaller area could not have been found available to carry out my views. To exaggerate my style would be to misrepresent it, and to bawl out speeches and roar out whispers would only make the matter worse. My aim has always been to keep comedy within its true limits, and represent society to the best of my ability, as it is, without 'o'erstepping the modesty of nature;' but insurmountable difficulties arise where a speaking trumpet is required for the actor and a telescope for the spectator. Still, even with these drawbacks, I have every reason to be satisfied with my success, and if I allude to them now, it is only in the hope of being able to persuade you that, with greater facilities of hearing and seeing,

my power of amusing you, such as it is, would have had a better chance of being really tested. However, I can only do my best to be heard and seen, and trust to your indulgence and good nature to make allowances for any deficiency of sound and sight that may tend to mar our mutual efforts to please and to be pleased."

It is not surprising that with this vivid perception of his own intentions, and in view of the pains with which he elaborated his work, he was keenly sensitive to criticism. "I am not like Sir Fretful Plagiary," he once said. "I do not pretend that I never read the newspapers; on the contrary, I do read them, and am proud to own that I have frequently gained most valuable hints from their criticisms. But to improve under their chastening influence it is necessary that one should be convinced of the truth of their remarks." And where he could not be convinced, or convince himself, of the justness of a criticism or of the fairness of an opponent, he was, to the last, eager to argue the point, and to set himself, if possible, right with the public. Perhaps his favourite part, and the one which he least liked to have depreciated, was Mr. Affable Hawk, in the "Game of Speculation;" and, on one occasion at least, his defence of his conception and execution of the part was even truculent. A series of papers had appeared in 1872 in "The Gentleman's Magazine," under the title of "Players of our Day," in which Mathews's acting in general was very hardly

judged, and in which Mr. Affable Hawk in particular was severely mauled. This was too much. It might have been supposed that the length of time that had elapsed since the first production of Mr. G. H. Lewes's version of De Balzac's "Mercadet"* would have blunted any feeling that Mathews might have had in the matter. But it was not so. Mr. Hawk was one of his chief pets, and a tremendous onslaught on the unlucky writer of the criticism appeared in the columns of *The Observer*. As Mathews's own analysis of one of his very best parts, the letter is worth studying.

"TO THE EDITOR OF 'THE OBSERVER.'

"SIR,

"It is rather late in the day to have to enter into a discussion upon the 'Game of Speculation,' a play which has enjoyed the favour of the public for more than twenty years, and is as much relished now as it was on its original production; but as the author of 'Players of our Day' has taken me to task for my mode of performing the principal character, I feel called upon to make some reply to his remarks.

"In the first place I may state that I never professed

* Of this successful play the adapter said that it was "written in less than thirteen hours, and produced after only two rehearsals; a fact worth recording when it is remembered how admirably it was played. Charles Mathews, whom I regard as the most accomplished living actor, played Mr. Affable Hawk in a style which would have carried any piece triumphantly."

to represent Balzac's 'Mercadet.' I merely produced an English play adapted from it, and without caring in any way for the French original, beyond making it the vehicle for an amusing and caustic picture of the doings of the Stock Exchange, exhibiting the clever ruses of an unscrupulous schemer in his efforts to outwit his fellow-speculators. It is therefore a no greater crime to have misrepresented Balzac's 'idea' (had I done so) than to have altered and adapted the pieces of Octave Feuillet, Dumas, Sardou, and others, as has so often been done; transferring the scenes from France to England, and fitting them to the manners and tastes of English audiences. But setting this on one side, I claim to assert that I have *not* mistaken Balzac's 'idea;' that the view I take of his 'Mercadet' is the right one; and that, if I have 'taken care to avoid anything tragic in my view of the character,' I have done so advisedly; for I defy the writer of 'Players of our Day,' or anyone else, to show the slightest pretence that Balzac has afforded for such a view being taken of his hero. The writer of 'Our Players' says, speaking of 'The Game of Speculation:' 'This English conception is utterly foreign to the whole meaning of the piece. No more tragic situation could be conceived than that of "Mercadet." We should smile to think of Mr. Charles Mathews portraying such a character. Yet this is Balzac's "Mercadet." This is the "Mercadet" of Got and the great French actors. This is the tradition

of the great Théâtre Français, where they religiously preserve the author's traditions.' Now, this I beg distinctly to say, is *not* Balzac's 'Mercadet.' That it may be the 'Mercadet' of Got I don't dispute; but that it is the 'Mercadet' of the great French actors I deny. It was not the view of the only other actor who ever played it in Paris, M. Geoffroy, the original at the Gymnase, who, so far from taking a lachrymose view of the character, made it an off-hand Robert Macaire; and it is *not* the 'tradition of the great Théâtre Français, where they religiously preserve the author's traditions.' Before people write on subjects they know nothing about, they should make themselves acquainted with the facts they are ignorant of. Is the gentleman who makes these assertions aware that the 'great Théâtre Français' REFUSED the piece of De Balzac? that it was never acted there at all till some twenty years after the author's death and its production at the Gymnase, and that consequently it could not have been in possession of any of his traditions? Is he aware that before it could be presented to the public, the posthumous work was confided to the hands of M. D'Ennery, who, with consummate skill, put it into actable shape, reduced it to three acts, remodelled the plot, and wrote a considerable quantity of the dialogue? If so, he is only justified in asserting that this was the 'Mercadet' of Got, but not that it was the 'Mercadet' of Balzac; and if any traditions are religiously preserved

at the Français, they must be the traditions of the Gymnase, where the piece was originally a year after Balzac's death, and where the part of Mercadet was represented by Geoffroy in a style diametrically opposite to that of Got.

"I feel perfectly convinced of two things. First, that the author of 'Our Players' never saw the 'Game of Speculation' at all; and next, that he never read Balzac's original five-act play as published in his works ('entièrement conforme au manuscrit de l'auteur'), or even D'Ennery's version, pronounced by Théophile Gautier a 'pièce arrangée avec tant de tact et d'habileté.' He has chosen to think the part unsuited to the 'touch-and-go style of a rattling comedian,' and the 'great play of Balzac converted into a gay, farcical piece of comedy, glided over by the pleasant and ever juvenile Charles,' settling in his own mind that, of course, my mode of playing it *must* be thoroughly unlike what it ought to be, because my usual style is unsuited to it. Perhaps, if he would take the trouble to read the three pieces, he would find that so far from the original being 'pared down' to suit my 'touch-and-go' style, not a word of the piece as acted at the Gymnase has been lost, and that much has been added to fit it to the English stage. He says: 'This play is indeed a monument of English dulness and bad taste. The treatment of Balzac's play is most discreditable; who that sees the glib, farcical, and even buffooning "Game of Specu-

lation," rattled through by the ingenious Charles, would suppose that the original was a play that pierced to what was the deepest tragic interest?' Who would indeed! 'After seeing the piece at the Français, with Got as the speculator, we came away impressed, serious, and delighted.' Rather a novel result of a witty comedy! 'The English "Game of Speculation" is farcical, light, trifling, and to those who have seen the masterly original, a simple profanation.' But no one has seen the masterly original. The masterly original was a bad, undramatic, unpresentable work, full of admirable writing and worldly satire, but unskilfully put together, and utterly useless for the purposes of the stage.

"As to the tragic view of the 'idea,' it is simply ridiculous. M. Got is one of the most accomplished actors on the French stage, and has no greater admirer than myself; but if he takes a 'tragic view' of the character of Mercadet, and plays it with 'pathos,' in my humble opinion M. Got has for once made a mistake. Mercadet is depicted by Balzac as a hard sarcastic man of the world, stopping at no baseness, revelling in falsehood and deceit, sacrificing the happiness of his own daughter to carry out his impositions, and with but one object throughout the piece, viz., that of cheating and outwitting all with whom he has to deal. Why the very name of the original play was 'Le Faiseur'—a man scheming morning, noon, and night to 'do' his fellow-creatures; condescending to extract money even from

his cook-wench; and shrinking from no means, however dishonest, to effect his ends. Fancy such a man being portrayed from a 'tragic' point of view! Fancy a sharp unscrupulous stockjobber crying over the cheat he is carrying on; spreading dishonest reports to bring about a rise, and crying over the necessity for having to do so in order to fill his pockets with his friends' money! Fancy Jeremy Diddler crying while endeavouring to do Sam the waiter out of his tenpence! It is too absurd! It is true that in the original comedy he brings tears into play in order to extract sympathy from the man he is cheating; but his 'asides' all the time, as he watches the effect he is producing, clearly show that his pathos is only simulated; and his satisfaction, when successful in securing the money he has worked for, is too marked to admit of the supposition that he is the victim of remorse. How does the gentleman who has 'studied his Balzac conscientiously' reconcile Mercadet's aside speeches, while wiping the crocodile tears from his eyes: 'I shall bring him to it—he's yielding—this will do it—I shall have his money'—with the tragic view of the situation? In his frantic and loud cry, to bring in his wife and daughter, of 'I'm in despair—I shall blow out my brains;' adding aside, with a smile, as they enter, 'They heard me;' followed by his sneering remarks upon his daughter's real burst of feeling, 'What touching accents—I was not half so natural—she's magnificent!' and so on, where is the tragic under-

current that it is sought to attribute to him—the pathos that is to send the spectator home 'impressed and serious'?

"I recommend the author of 'Players of our Day' to set himself three tasks: first, to read the original comedy, as written by Balzac, and point out, if he can, a single instance of real pathos or of tragedy in the character of Mercadet from beginning to end; secondly, to read the play as acted, and compare it line by line with the English version, and say where the one differs from the other; and thirdly, to come and see the 'Game of Speculation' (I hope he will secure a comfortable stall, as that may materially influence his judgment), and point out the 'discreditable buffoonery' indulged by the ingenious Charles. . . .

"Your obedient Servant,

"CHARLES MATHEWS."

This storm had the effect of clearing the air, and the *Observer* letter was followed by a private letter to the author of the paper, treating the matter in a lighter and more pleasant vein:

"DEAR SIR,

"The first lawyers in the land bully each other in public, and then walk off arm-in-arm together to dinner the best of friends in the world. With such well-known

high precedents I address you as a man and a brother, and boldly ask you as a favour to me in earnest to do what I only proposed in jest, viz., to come and see the 'Game of Speculation.' I will keep a stall for you any night this week you will select. You wrote too well not to make it a laudable ambition to obtain your honest, and if possible revised criticism. I promise to play the part exactly as I have always done, and if, after seeing it patiently throughout from beginning to end, you still condemn, I will meekly bow my head and regret my inability to please you; while, should I succeed in inducing you to change your opinion, I shall feel sincere pride in causing you to modify your verdict.

"I give you my word that I do not know whom I am addressing, beyond the fact of your being the author of 'Players of our Day,' but as a writer worthy of attention, I am naturally anxious to obtain your matured criticism, which I hope you will as freely give as I will resignedly receive."

The author of the article which had so roused Mathews—it was that usually sound judge, Mr. Percy Fitzgerald—accepted the invitation and renewed his acquaintance with Mr. Affable Hawk, frankly owning afterwards that the paper had been written as the result of a hurried judgment, and on a recollection only of the "Game of Speculation," and acknowledging that "it

really was a great performance." Thus the incident closed pleasantly, and as it served to bring about a personal friendship between actor and critic, was probably not regretted by either; but the vigour of Mathews's defence is a good test of the sensitiveness with which he regarded what he judged to be ill-considered or unjust criticism, and which finds constant expression in various ways, both in his speeches and letters. It was, perhaps, owing to the fact that adverse criticism came so rarely that it stung when it did come. In truth, from the very first, there was an almost universal consensus of opinion in Mathews's favour. At home or abroad, in London or Paris, in America and in Australia, it was the same thing. It was not only that the public were always attracted to the theatre, and that the rough and ready money test was universally favourable, critics of every kind, and of every shade of divergence of opinion on other matters, united on this point. Rarely indeed has an actor had so many friends.

In what terms the brilliant critics of the Parisian press described the English actor has been told in the chapter which records the performances at the Variétés and the Vaudeville. It would be impossible to give extracts from the great army of English critical writers, but two of the ablest and keenest among them may be quoted—George Henry Lewes and Shirley Brooks. The former, who had known and studied

Mathews long, deals with his early career upon the stage, and places the young actor before us vividly and pleasantly:

"I have followed the career of this actor with delight. His first appearance, in 'Old and Young Stagers,' forms a pleasant landing-place in my memory as I wander backwards. The incomparable Liston delayed his departure from the stage in order to protect the *début* of the son of his old colleague and friend, and there have been few *débuts* more curiously expected and more cordially welcomed. It was known to 'the boxes' that Charles Mathews had been made a pet of in many aristocratic families, and had acted in private circles at Rome, Florence, and Naples, with singular success.

"It was known to the pit (in those days there were no stalls) that the son of the public favourite, though trained as an architect, had resolved to quit Pugin for Thespis; and as the Olympic, under the management of Madame Vestris, was the theatre of the elegancies and the home of pleasant mirthfulness, the appearance of the young artist at this theatre was in itself an event. But expectations such as these are as perilous to weak pretensions as they are encouraging to real talent; and if Charles Mathews triumphed it was in virtue of very undeniable qualities. Anything so airy and fascinating as this young man had not been seen upon our stage. In general, theatres feel that the *jeune premier* is their weak point. He is bad enough in fiction, but in fiction

we do not see him; whereas on the stage the weakness of the character is usually aggravated by a bend in the back and an implacable fatuity. It is a rare assemblage of qualities that enables an actor to be sufficiently good-looking without being insufferably conceited; to be quiet without being absurdly insignificant; to be lively without being vulgar; to look like a gentleman, to speak and move like a gentleman, and yet to be as interesting as if this quietness were only the restraint of power, not the absence of individuality. And the more pronounced the individuality—that is, the more impassioned or more vivacious the character represented—the greater is the danger of becoming offensive by exaggeration and coarseness. Charles Mathews was eminently vivacious, a nimble spirit of mirth sparkled in his eye and gave airiness to every gesture. He was in incessant movement without ever becoming obtrusive or fidgety; a certain grace tempered his vivacity; an innate sense of elegance rescued him from the exaggerations of animal spirits. He wanted weight, as an old playgoer once reproachfully said of him; but he had the qualities of his defects, and the want of weight became delightful airiness. Whether he danced the Tarantella with charming Miss Fitzpatrick, or snatched up a guitar and sang, he neither danced like a dancer nor sang like a singer, but threw the charm of a lively nature into both. I think I see him now in 'One Hour,' seated opposite Madame Vestris, and made to subdue his

restless impatience while he held her skeins of silk—a very drawing-room version of Hercules at the feet of Omphale; and I picture to myself how the majority of *jeunes premiers* would comport themselves in that position! In our juvenile apprehensions, he was the *beau ideal* of elegance. We studied his costumes with ardent devotion; we envied him his tailor, and made him our pattern to live and to die; we could see no faults in him, and all the criticisms which our elders passed on him grated harshly on our ears as the croaking of fogies."

Shirley Brooks, writing just before the Australian tour, brings his criticism down to a later date, and the pleasantly written "God-speed" gives an excellent idea of Mathews's strong points:

"How long ago it is since Mr. Charles Mathews made his first appearance in 'One Hour' or the 'Carnival Ball,' at the Olympic Theatre, is a less agreeable consideration for 'us youth,' as Falstaff says, than the extraordinary quantity of intellectual pleasure which, since that date, he has been giving to those who, in spite of the many, believe acting to be one of the fine arts—to require brains, culture, and study—and who are not content to be amused with an inferior article. I do not think that full justice has ever been done to Mr. Mathews as an artist, and I do think that fact has come across the consciences of sundry now that he is leaving us. Nobody ever saw him play carelessly, or without doing his utmost to fill in the outline of

his part, often a mere sketch, with the best colouring it would bear. When, by good fortune, he got hold of a character that he could fairly grapple with, his brightness, his *finesse*, his completeness of personation, were things to remember, and we mean to remember them. Of the most graceful type of comedy (not that of the old school, which demands mock sentiment) he was—if I fall into the preterite it is only because he is going away, and he is as brilliant as ever—Mr. Mathews is the most perfect representative I have ever seen. As for the parts which we have agreed to call Charles Mathews's parts, because his rapid articulation and never-wearied liveliness were called into play by them, they were delightful *tours de force*, but he has done a hundred better things. I hope that he means to let the Australians see him in a round of his more important characters, as well as in his pyrotechnics. But let him play what he may, there is no danger of what he gracefully touched on in his speech at the banquet on Monday. Let the colonists watch his acting, and they will not say that we overrate him. I wish him a pleasant voyage; I envy his fellow-passengers, and I am sure that he is departing on a prosperous adventure. 'Anything for a change' is desirable at times, but a change to a glorious climate, and to fresh audiences prepared to give that heartiest of all receptions, a colonial welcome, to an artist who will repay tenfold any pleasure he may receive, is a

change on which he may be fairly congratulated. '*Exit*—to the Antipodes' is his last stage direction, but after an interval comes, 'Re-enters—with a banker's book;' and will there not be a reception then?"

One more criticism—this time not addressed to the public, but contained in a private letter to Mathews—will be read with interest. It emanates from an old friend and comrade, the veteran J. R. Planché, whose name and whose graceful pen can never be dissociated from the Mathews-Vestris management of the Lyceum.

"6, Royal Avenue, Chelsea, S.W., 3rd Oct., 1875.

"My dear Charley,

"We were all delighted. Those who had not seen you had, of course, never seen anything like you; and I, who had seen you so often, could only echo them, finding you as good as ever, and having never in my long life seen your equal on the English stage. Before your advent, *whim* was unknown to a British audience. 'Genteel comedy,' as it was called, had its exponents, and 'low comedy' was gloriously represented in the persons of Munden and Liston; but light comedy—such as you have *created*, for there is no other term that adequately expresses it—had to suffer martyrdom between the utter inanity of the 'walking gentleman' and the artificial exuberance of the first light comedian. 'I name no parties.' Nature was altogether ignored.

Prevailing fopperies of dress or manners were imitated with Chinese fidelity; but

'Soul was wanting there.'

You are the first actor I have seen in the course of my exceptionally long life who has realised on the stage the peculiarities of English gentlemen,* giving 'the very age and body of the time, its form and pressure.' Wishing you even yet more years of health, activity, and professional success, believe me,

"Your very old Friend,

"J. R. PLANCHÉ."

* Thirty years before, D'Orsay, writing to Mrs. Mathews, had struck the same note. "We went to see Charles in 'Used Up.' He played admirably, and, I think, even better than it is performed in French. The fact is, that the part must be acted by a real gentleman, and a man who has been a great deal in society."

APPENDIX A.

MR. CHARLES MATHEWS'S FAREWELL ADDRESS.

NEW YORK, NOVEMBER 13TH, 1838.

(From *The New York Albion*, November 19th, 1838.)

PARK THEATRE.

THE last appearance of Mr. and Mrs. Charles Mathews in America took place here on Tuesday night. The favourite pieces of "One Hour," "My Eleventh Day," and the "Old and Young Stager," kept the audience in continued laughter from beginning to end. Mrs. Mathews was in better voice and spirits than usual. The brilliant appearance of a house crowded in every part, the boxes containing an overwhelming majority of ladies, and perhaps the feeling that the period of her mortification and annoyance was at an end, all combined to produce this happy effect. She was called forth at the conclusion of the "Eleventh Day," and received the rapturous applause of the house. At the termination of the evening's performance Mr. Mathews received the same compliment. After the first cheers had subsided, the audience resumed their seats, and a dead silence prevailed. Mr. Mathews then delivered with great energy and vigour the following address, which we give as it has been written out for us, with the sanction of Mr. Mathews, and which was listened to with marked attention, and cheered throughout with the most enthusiastic plaudits.

"LADIES AND GENTLEMEN,—This is the first time I have ever addressed an audience in my own character, and I certainly had not the slightest intention of doing so now; but, being assured that on the last night of our engagement it would be taken as a mark of disrespect were I to remain wholly silent, I am determined that that imputation at least shall not be cast upon me; and indeed I should be most ungrateful were I to refuse a few words to those kind friends who have given us such a 'bumper at parting.' (Applause.)

"In consideration of the lateness of the hour, I will be as brief as possible in what I have to say, though, as this, ladies and gentlemen, is our last interview, and as in all probability we may never meet again, I do hope you will not deny me your patient attention for a few minutes. Our story is soon told and easily understood, and if I have hitherto refrained from troubling you with a single word, upon the several occasions when I have had the honour of being called forward to receive your flattering applause, I have so refrained purposely, from the fear that as my own independent spirit would not allow me to offer unqualified thanks for partial success, some unguarded expression might be seized upon as conveying intentional offence to the American public. I can now, however, speak without danger of being accused of interested motives, inasmuch as we have appeared before you professionally for the last time, and our immediate return to Europe is already determined on.

"We set sail for this country, ladies and gentlemen, as upon a trip of pleasure. Steam reduced the voyage to a mere nothing, and though it is true we were obliged to make many sacrifices in leaving home, friends, and unvarying professional success, to risk a doubtful reception among strangers, still we did so with light hearts and perfect reliance on the well-known hospitality of the people we were about to visit, backed by a thorough confidence in our own good intentions, and the conviction that, as we set out with the determination to spare no effort to please, our endeavours must be met, if not with brilliant success, at all events with the usual indulgence and protection so notoriously extended to British actors. We set foot then on these shores, resolved to be pleased with everything; and to the question of 'How do you like our country?' so universally asked by all persons here upon a first introduction (a slight murmur), we readily answered in terms of the highest praise, as fortunately we were then honestly and conscientiously able to do.

"Two days after our arrival at this city, the weather being insufferably hot, we were advised to proceed at once to the Catskill Mountains. We did so, with the intention of passing there our few weeks of leisure in cool retirement; but after being jolted, at the hazard of our necks, up to that 'cloud-capt' hotel called the Mountain House (where we arrived between nine and ten o'clock at night), we found it a gay, noisy, fashionable hotel, anything but

adapted for those who sought quiet and retirement; and therefore at an early hour next day, at the still greater hazard of our necks, we were jolted down again. (Laughter.) Our intention was to return at once to New York; but, that same night, chance lodged us at the Exchange House at Poughkeepsie, where we found all the quiet that we had been taught to expect at the Mountain House; there we at once installed ourselves, and there we remained for three weeks as retired as possible, literally confined to our apartments, with the exception of our usual drive in the cool of the evening.

"Little did we expect, ladies and gentlemen, while applauding ourselves for our politic conduct in retiring altogether from the public eye, and thereby avoiding, as we supposed, all possibility of offence, that at that very moment we were insulting the whole American nation—that the press was teeming far and near with comments on our atrocious behaviour, and that a fatal prejudice was rapidly gaining ground against us.

"Of all this we remained in a state of happy ignorance till our return to New York. I was then informed that we had given serious offence at Saratoga Springs, on our way to the Falls of Niagara—that we had refused to sit at the public table, but at the same time had insisted that our servants should be admitted there, and that the visitors at the hotel, disgusted at the gross outrage, had been compelled to rise and leave the table.

"I could only smile at this absurd accusation, and deemed it one of the gossiping and ephemeral paragraphs of a newspaper, the subject of an hour's chit-chat, and then to be forgotten. I therefore replied, jestingly, that there were seventeen reasons why the alleged offence at Saratoga could not have been committed—the first was, that we had never been there. (Laughter.) I presumed that the other sixteen reasons would not be required—(great laughter)—but I was mistaken. The report was not suffered to die a natural death; it was resuscitated day by day, nourished and amplified hour by hour, till at last the conviction was forced upon me, that what I had at first looked upon as a harmless mistake, was, on the contrary, a regularly organised deliberate falsehood, systematically planned and persevered in, for the purpose of creating a rancorous feeling against us in the public mind, and thus, at once, irreparably injuring us on our first appearance at this theatre. I asked advice as to the propriety of

openly contradicting these reports, but was assured that such a step was quite uncalled for. I thought so myself, but I was wrong again. The night of our first appearance arrived. The theatre was crowded to the ceiling, chiefly with gentlemen; hundreds were turned away from the doors, but very few ladies had dared to venture within them—in short, it was clear that a riot was anticipated. When Mrs. Mathews appeared upon the stage, the cheers were enthusiastic, but the ominous sounds of disapprobation were also to be heard—a deafening shout of applause, however, from the more liberal portion of the audience, at once silenced those sounds. On the symphony of her first song being played, disapprobation again manifested itself, and was again checked as before. I was thunderstruck, and made up my mind that the torrent of ill-feeling was only stemmed, from motives of gallantry, until my appearance, which would doubtless be the signal for a general tumult. Judge, then, of my surprise, ladies and gentlemen, at meeting with the most cordial welcome, without a single dissentient voice. How was this? Was I not the proper person to have been attacked, rather than my wife? Was I not the person answerable for the misconduct alleged against us? No—hers was the talent they sought to disparage. The secret was at once explained—the disapprobation had just as much to do with our conduct in America as it had to do with the late general election. (Laughter and cheers.)

"I must not trespass too much upon your patience, ladies and gentlemen, by entering more into detail. Suffice it to say, that since the failure of this attempt to mar our first appearance and drive us from your stage, no efforts have been left untried to bring about the same end by other means. The press (that is, a portion of it) has been industriously employed in writing us down. Why, or by whom instigated, I do not wish here to inquire; but if it be any triumph to them to know it, I beg to assure them that they have fully succeeded. They have not only utterly destroyed our professional prospects, but have undermined the health and spirits of the lady they have chosen to make the object of their unmanly attack.

"Ladies and gentlemen, I appeal to yourselves—can you blame me for at once ending the injustice, by removing my wife from a persecution she is so unaccustomed to? (Cries of 'No, no—certainly not,' from the boxes.) Look for one moment calmly at the circumstances. A malicious report is invented and put in circulation without

the least inquiry into its truth, throughout the United States. I do not speak figuratively, but literally; I have received newspapers containing bitter invectives against us from all parts of the Union—(who could have imagined that we were of such consequence in the eyes of the New World?). And all about what? Nothing but our conduct at Saratoga, where we have never been! (Laughter and much applause.)

"Now, in conclusion, gentlemen, I appeal to you as gentlemen, I appeal to you as men of business—leaving all feeling out of the question—let us view this affair in the light of a commercial speculation, a matter of pounds, shillings, and pence—of 'dollars.' Is it *likely* that we should have behaved in the manner ascribed to us? We came to this country with one avowed object—to make a certain sum of money in a given time. That sum was secured to us in England before starting. Good houses or bad houses we were to be paid the same. There was only one thing indispensable, viz. to please. Now to have acted as we are said to have done, must have been either the result of ignorance, in which case surely we ought to have been held guiltless of evil intention, or the result of a deliberate wish to insult the people of America, whose good opinion it was so much our interest to gain, and thereby defeat the sole object of our voyage. I repeat, was such conduct probable? These are the only two views that could be taken of the circumstance had it been true, and I hope it is unnecessary for me to pledge my honour that there is not the slightest foundation for this base falsehood. (Deafening and repeated applause.)

"I have done. Your kindness, ladies and gentlemen, let me assure you, will ever be deeply and gratefully remembered by us both, and I trust that notwithstanding the unfavourable circumstances under which we have appeared before you, you have not found us flag in our efforts to please those who have generously endeavoured to support us. (Great applause.) We have fought up against the attack with all our strength, but the enemy has proved too much for us, and, at length, after mature deliberation, we are compelled to adopt the only alternative left us, that of abandoning the field. In the name of Mrs. Mathews and myself, allow me, ladies and gentlemen, to bid you, and for ever, most respectfully, Farewell."

Mr. Mathews then bowed and retired amidst the hearty cheers and long continued applause of the whole house.

ADDRESS ON RETIRING FROM MANAGEMENT OF THE OLYMPIC, MAY 31, 1839.

(Spoken by MADAME VESTRIS.)

"LADIES AND GENTLEMEN,—For the ninth time I have the honour to drop my courtesy and my curtain at the close of a prosperous season, for which, in Mr. Mathews's name and my own, I beg to offer you our best acknowledgments.

"There have been peculiar circumstances connected with the season about to conclude which I conclude I had better say but little about. I may, however, safely and truly say that I left you with unfeigned regret and returned to you with unbounded joy; and though it must be confessed that the mode in which you manifested your regret at my absence was more calculated to feed my vanity than my treasury, your kindness since my return has left the latter nothing to complain of.

"Encouraged by the approbation my managerial efforts have received, we have become lessees of the Theatre Royal, Covent Garden. I am aware that we shall have many difficulties to contend with. We propose to face them manfully and womanfully—to preserve the good points of former managements and reject the bad—to take with us the best results of my experience here, and to trust to the public to do the rest.

"Some kind friends have already prophesied that I shall not succeed there. My only answer is, that nine years ago they said I should never succeed *here*.

"The most absurd reports are in circulation about the characters which we mean to appropriate to ourselves: two of them, and two only, I shall notice, for if allowed to remain uncontradicted they may do us serious injury—Mr. Mathews will *not* play Macbeth, and I have positively refused Queen Catherine.

"In conclusion, ladies and gentlemen, I beg to state that the great increase of our business having justified us in taking more extensive premises, I most respectfully, for the performers and myself, bid you farewell until we meet in September next at the Theatre Royal, Covent Garden, where I entreat a continuance of your custom and recommendation for the house of Mathews, Vestris, and Company."

COVENT GARDEN THEATRE.

"THE season was closed at this theatre on Saturday night, by the performance of 'La Sonnambula,' with 'Patter v. Clatter,' and 'The White Cat,' for the benefit of Madame Vestris and Mr. Charles Mathews. Since the first appearance of the opera, we have never heard it better sung by the principal vocalists, nor worse by the chorus. Miss Adelaide Kemble, especially, went through her part of Amina with so much enthusiasm, that she appeared to us to be almost over-exerting herself in an endeavour to render triumphant the retreat of the fair lessee, to whose discrimination and spirit both the public and herself have been indebted for her own appearance on the boards of her time-honoured family. At the conclusion of the piece she was long and loudly applauded. On the entrance of Mr. Charles Mathews, in the clever burletta we have named, of which he is himself the author, the greeting was incessant and protracted. Hats and handkerchiefs were waved from every part of the house, to an accompaniment of cheers and bravos, seldom heard nowadays within the walls of any theatre. This friendly greeting must have convinced him that he leaves Covent Garden for Drury Lane attended by the good wishes of the public. At the termination of the interlude he appeared before the curtain to speak the address, which will be found below. It was well and feelingly delivered, notwithstanding its plethora of puns, and during its recital the various applicable points were seized upon with avidity by the audience, who welcomed both them and the speaker with a greeting truly enthusiastic. After Mr. Mathews had retired, the calls for Madame Vestris reverberated through the house. Shortly afterwards she appeared, led on by her husband, in the dress of the character she sustained in the afterpiece, whereupon the whole audience rose *en masse*, and vehemently cheered her. In a few moments the stage was covered with chaplets of flowers, directed towards her from the boxes nearest the proscenium. Several of these she picked up, and pressed to her lips with an emotion that she could not conceal. During the progress of 'The White Cat' every favourable opportunity was also made use of by the house again and again to evince its sympathy for herself and Mr. Mathews, the constant repetition of which must have

been as soothing as it was agreeable to their feelings. The following is a copy of the farewell address:

"'Ladies and Gentlemen,—No seasons, excepting "Thomson's Seasons," are endowed with immortality, and ours, having run the undeviating course marked out for it on the railroad of Time, has arrived at its terminus. Following the railroad metaphor, may I venture to appeal to you for a certificate under your hands, that the general line we have adopted has met with your approbation—that the engine has worked well—that the seats have been comfortable—the entertainment satisfactory—the fares moderate—and the conductors civil and attentive. But let us leave the railroad, and return to the stage—I mean the old original Covent Garden stage—that stage which we took with a view to running constantly from Covent Garden to the Bank. My partner and I have been its directors for three years, during which time we have endeavoured, at much personal and pecuniary sacrifice, to sow the seeds of that solid prosperity, which would, we hoped, one day, manifest itself in permanent satisfaction to you, and in a golden harvest to ourselves; but, alas! for "the mutability of human affairs!" Our first season was merely sowing—our second little more than hoeing—and, though the third has been growing, we must leave to other hands the fourth, which might have been our mowing. *Why* we have felt it our duty to quit these premises, I will not intrude upon you to explain. Suffice it to say, that in quitting them, we leave not only our business, but our goodwill to our successor; and if, ladies and gentlemen, that successor should prove to be a gentleman—the admired representative of that thrice-honoured theatrical family, another gifted daughter of whose gifted house it is our pride to have brought so triumphantly under your notice—in that case, ladies and gentlemen, I can only say that, "as far as one manager *can* forgive another," it will afford us much consolation should the change prove to be for his and your gain. For Mrs. Mathews and myself, ladies and gentlemen, I beg most unaffectedly to return you our humble and cordial thanks for the unvarying kindness you have shown us. Both as actors and as managers, we are deeply beholden to you; and hereafter, whether as actors or managers, whether here or elsewhere, we trust that a proper sense of that kindness will ever be present to animate and to sustain

our best exertions for your amusement. Ladies and gentlemen, in the joint names of ourselves and the performers, I most respectfully bid you farewell.'"

MR. CHARLES MATHEWS TO HIS CREDITORS.

"GENTLEMEN,—In justice to myself and for your guidance, I beg to submit to you publicly the following statement: Only eighteen months since I was legally relieved from all my pecuniary liabilities, and was free as air to begin the world a new man. Had I chosen to avail myself of the full power then placed in my hands, I should not now be under the necessity of addressing you; but, guided by what I deemed a strict principle of honour, I adopted another course. The frustration of all my hopes at Covent Garden Theatre brought ruin upon me, and loss to many concerned with me in that speculation. But, gentlemen, there were others again upon whom these consequences had no right to be visited, individuals to whom I felt myself deeply indebted for many personal acts of kindness wholly unconnected with that involvement. No sooner was I free than I set about making the best arrangements in my power for the gradual liquidation of all these persons' claims, content to set apart for the rest of my life, if required, the half of my profits for their satisfaction. I voluntarily, and without solicitation, took upon myself fresh obligations to the amount of three thousand pounds, in the full reliance that, in return for a straightforward and honest act on my part, I should meet with every indulgence and assistance in carrying out my views, at least from the parties in whose favour these fresh securities were given. From that instant I have known no peace—night or day—in town or out of town—well or ill. No moment has been free from persecution. The non-payment to the exact time of the agreed instalments has brought executions into my house and arrest to my person, exorbitant law expenses, and extortionate interest. By dint of months of labour of body and mind—by the mutual exertions of myself and my wife in England, Ireland, and Scotland, I sent up nine hundred pounds out of my hard earnings in furtherance of the good work, and on the last night of our provincial engagements, while

priding myself on the speedy redemption of my honourable undertakings, I was arrested at Liverpool on overdue instalments, came up, and found an execution in my house in town, and was informed that a dozen other creditors were anxiously waiting my return.

"New embarrassments had also arisen in my absence. Actions had been commenced against me for sums that had been inserted in my schedule, and which, so far as the principle was concerned, I was released; but there being sureties for payment of these sums, they were called on so to do, and I subsequently became their debtor in the amounts they so paid, and for which latter amounts I was sued by the new creditor, and from which I consequently imagined myself released, but which had escaped through some legal valve to attack me with renewed vigour to the amount of above four thousand pounds.

"Still, myself and my wife held on our way steadily and cheerfully, in the vain hope of combating this giant debt. Every plan I could devise was proposed, commenced, and frustrated by rapacity. The mouths of my devourers seemed to open wider and wider in proportion to the magnitude of the food provided for them. At length, after great perseverance, I obtained the slow consent of the most important creditors to my putting aside thirteen hundred pounds per annum, to be paid by weekly instalments into the hands of a trustee, to satisfy the largest portion of the rapidly-increasing debt, hourly swelling with hideous law and yawning interest. I removed to a house of less rent, diminished my general expenses, and really began to think that all difficulty would soon be at an end. Four months have scarcely passed under this new arrangement, and means have already been found to render it of no avail. Actions have been brought against me upon sums comprehended in the trust deed, but passed into other hands; nearly all the persons not included in that deed have overwhelmed me with law processes and doubled their debts by consequent expenses; difficulties have increased every hour, till at length the cup has run over, and the unwilling but full conviction stares me in the face, that what I deemed an act of simple justice was but an act of utter folly; and I can safely add that the only remark that I have heard made—the only return I have met with, even from the very parties for whom I have made these sacrifices, has been literally (will it be believed?) that of 'more fool you!' I am

almost tempted to coincide in the truth of the rebuke. Now, gentlemen, listen.

"I have for months past submitted to be told by people who little dreamed of the manner in which the money was really going, that I must be 'very extravagant'—that I was 'living too expensively'—that I ought to be 'putting something by for the future' (while I had not even enough for the present). I have submitted to see my tradespeople go away from the door unpaid for the very necessaries of life with which they furnished me. I have submitted to resort to subterfuges, for which I despised myself, to gain entrance to and exit from the theatre in which I was engaged, to enable me to do my duty to the public, and to the very manager out of whose pocket all these claims were to be paid, but never to be satisfied. In short, for a year and a half have I been harassed, censured, sued, arrested, lectured, and drained of every farthing I could muster, earn, or borrow, and no one debt seems materially reduced by it—interest and law will swallow up everything.

"This, gentlemen, is the state of the case; judge of it for yourselves. A meeting is about to be called, and the vouchers for these facts will be produced for your inspection. A proposition will be made to you, which, I trust, will either meet with your approval or elicit from you a better. All I can say is, I have done my best. I am driven from my house and from my profession—to neither of which, I am determined, will I return, until I can present myself before the public freely and independently, as I have always endeavoured to do—able to devote myself to its service with a mind at ease, unshackled by the torments and anxieties of a distracting involvement, which (though certainly of my own creation) I can conscientiously assert has had its origin in the most honourable motives.

"I am, Gentlemen,

"Your obedient Servant,

"C. J. Mathews.

"Nov. 29, 1843."

BOSTON, U.S. 1857.

(From a Boston Paper.)

CHARLES MATHEWS.—We are happy to see that this inimitable artist remains another week at the Boston Theatre, where he has delighted all who have escaped the pecuniary pressure which has reduced so many from affluence to a condition which requires strict economy, and prevents that enjoyment of amusements which is characteristic of our citizens. At any other time, we know that such an artist would have filled even our large theatre, for it is not a vain boast to assert that we possess the taste to appreciate the exquisite neatness and unrivalled beauties of the style of acting of which Mr. Mathews is the great initiator and master. As it is, the audience embrace nightly our best critics, and those who are somewhat *blasé* in theatricals, and rarely sit a piece through, may be seen in their seats throughout the performance, a compliment to Mr. Mathews, which marks the decided impression he has made in this city. Years hence we shall probably speak of him, as those of a former generation allude to his father, as one whose genius was apparent even in trifles, and whose accomplishments embraced every requisite which tends to make the true artist. We regret that he has visited us at such an unfortunate period, for he would have found, in a more auspicious day, a welcome and an adieu which would have made his remembrance of a visit to Boston one of the most agreeable episodes of his eventful life.

On Friday evening Mr. Charles Mathews had a fine benefit, and upon being called out he spoke as follows:

"I cannot sufficiently thank you for the kind encouragement and support I have met with in the city of Boston, at a moment, too, when it was hardly to have been expected that my appearance would meet with any attention whatever, so completely must the public mind have been occupied with more important matters, and I cannot but feel the more flattered by the compliment.

"I am somewhat unlucky in timing my visits to America. In 1838, some nineteen years ago, I first crossed the Atlantic and popped upon a pecuniary crisis in New York; and now, in 1857, I have had the luck to pop upon another. It seems as if my presence were doomed

to bring a panic with it (great laughter); but I am happy to find at any rate that it has not had the effect of frightening you out of the theatre. (Laughter and applause.) Indeed, ladies and gentlemen, I think the best thing you can do is to come into it as often as possible, and to divert your mind for an hour or two from the cares of real life. In times of difficulty, so far from its being an expensive luxury, the theatre is about the cheapest mode you can adopt of passing your leisure moments. (Laughter.) During one of our hardest winters in London a poor man was observed almost every night, to the surprise of the money-taker, paying his threepence to the gallery of the Surrey Theatre. At last, out of curiosity, he got into conversation with him. 'How is it,' said he, 'that you, who appear to be a very poor man, can afford to come and pay your money here night after night, when one would think you had barely enough to keep life and soul together at home?' 'That's it,' said he, 'I come here out of economy. (Laughter.) It's the cheapest way I can spend my evening. At home I must burn fire and candle, and have something to eat and drink for myself and friend, at an expense of two or three shillings at the least, while here I get warmed, lighted, lodged, and amused, with plenty of good company around me, and all for threepence.' There was philosophy in this, ladies and gentlemen, and I recommend it to your serious consideration. (Much laughter.)

"I trust when next I have the pleasure of visiting you that matters will all have come right again; and I hope, at all events, that I may carry away with me the conviction that the success I have now met with has been sufficient to warrant me in the belief that you will be glad to see me again. (Loud applause.) Meantime, ladies and gentlemen, I assure you that I am most grateful for your kind and hearty welcome." (Long and continued applause.)

ROYAL GENERAL THEATRICAL FUND DINNER,

April 18, 1859.

Charles J. Mathews *in the Chair.*

After the initiatory toasts, the Chairman proposed the toast of the evening, "Prosperity to the Royal General Theatrical Fund," and in doing so he spoke as follows:

"Gentlemen,—The next toast may not be dismissed so summarily; and I begin to feel the awful position in which I am placed. (Laughter.) I have often experienced the trepidation of appearing for the first time in a new character, but I may safely say that I never felt any responsibility equal to that I have incurred on the present occasion, when I have not only undertaken a new character for the first time, but one quite out of my line, and one which I fear is far beyond my capabilities. However, my manager, Mr. Buckstone, has insisted upon my accepting it, and I have not dared to disobey (laughter), for you are perhaps not aware that the penalty for refusing a part amounts to no less than three weeks' loss of salary, which I really cannot afford, so here I present myself recklessly before you, and though I cannot say that I have undertaken the part 'at short notice,' I certainly do most earnestly solicit 'your usual indulgence.' (Applause.) The difficulties I have to contend with are great. However, I am used to difficulties (laughter), and am ever ready to face them in a good cause. (Cheers.) They may be divided, like a sermon, into three parts. I have first to persuade you that I am the proper exponent of the subject in hand; next, that being the proper person, I am able lucidly to explain the object we have in view; and lastly, that I am possessed of the requisite eloquence to open your hearts, and, what is more difficult still, your purse-strings (laughter and cheers); that eloquence, in short, which has been poetically described as of force sufficient to extract a sixpence out of a gas-pipe. (Laughter.) I was rather puzzled at first to conceive why I should be chosen to occupy a chair honoured as it has been hitherto by men eminent for their great public talents and no less private worth, but on racking my brain to discover why my friend and manager should thus have determined on placing me in so equivocal a position, a position which I feel I am utterly unfit to hold, and in laying me

open to the many remarks which may naturally follow my presumption in presenting myself before you as the advocate of prudence and economy, I have at last come to this conclusion, that he has selected me, not for the purpose of setting me before you as an example, but rather as a warning. (Laughter.) Well, with all my heart; if even in that capacity I can be made serviceable to-day, I with pleasure accept the position, and am ready to put my head in the pillory. (Applause.) You will therefore be kind enough, gentlemen, to look upon me in the light of a fingerpost, and allow me to point out to others that path which I have not followed myself, but which I can safely and conscientiously pronounce to be the right one. (Hear.) The objects and advantages of the admirable fund, the interests of which we are met to promote, are too well known and recognised to need any advocacy of mine. (Hear, hear.) Its benefits and privileges have been over and over again descanted upon by your excellent treasurer, who is here, true to his post, to reiterate his observations; while your worthy secretary sits in calm dignity (laughter), loaded to the muzzle, with reports and figures respecting the state of its funds. You will be pleased to hear that I have nothing to do with the funds. (Laughter.) I am happy to say it is a department with which I am not called upon to interfere, so that the only task that remains for me is to exert my powers of fascination to induce you to swell the amount of those funds, and aid the institution by a liberal contribution this evening, and not only to produce the donation from your right-hand pockets, which you have already placed there according to your annual custom, but to extract that reserve fund from your left-hand pockets, only provided in case some brilliant burst of eloquence, or extra touching appeal, should wrench the button from its guardianship and magnetise the coy cash from its stronghold. (Applause.) It is not by upholding and dilating upon the transcendent literary merit of our national drama, nor on its instructive tendency—nor upon the excellence of its professors—nor upon their high intellectual gifts, that I shall hope to warm up the pecuniary cockles of your heart. (Laughter.) It may, perhaps, be thought my duty to bring forward those often-urged claims to your consideration, but though I am here to do my duty, I do not think it a part of my duty to teach you yours. I have too much need to learn myself, to become the teacher of others. (Laughter.) It is rather to your sympathy than to your duty that I

wish to appeal, and I am glad of it: the task is easier, for however perverse it may be, you must all have observed that while stern duty is ever the boasted mainspring of human action, it is dear, kind sympathy, after all, that quietly performs the sweetest part of the work. (Applause.) Now, mine is a case altogether of sympathy, and I leave duty out of the question. There is no duty which compels you to contribute to the comforts and happiness of the declining days of those who, in brighter hours, have added only to your amusement —to smooth the pillow of the poor actor who has in former years afforded you an innocent means of diverting your minds from the worry and turmoil of the world, and carried you away for the time being from the carking cares and anxieties of real life, that weighed down your spirits and fatigued your frame. No, you paid your money at the time; you had your money's worth, and there the matter ended (laughter); there your duty ended, but not so your sympathy, for I am happy to say, and it is of this I would remind you, that the mental relaxation and amusement you purchase with your shilling at the doors of a theatre are not like the fender or the coal-scuttle you purchase at the hardwareman's (laughter), not like the cigar you enjoy, and the remembrance of which you throw away with its butt-end. You have no lurking affection in the corner of your hearts for the ironmonger whose shovel or whose corkscrew you carry off in exchange for your cash; or even for the tobacconist whose choice Havana you puff with so much satisfaction, shared though it be with your dear friend, who abundantly accepts the liberality of your cigar-case. You do not nudge your wife or your sister with a grin of pleasure, only checked by your politeness, as a celebrated physician, an eminent barrister, or a Commissioner of Woods and Forests passes you in the streets. You have no congenial feeling towards those still more common caterers to your solid enjoyments—your butcher, your baker, or your fishmonger. You point out, it is true, the great statesman, the great general, the learned judge, the reverend divine with respect, with admiration, mixed with awe, sometimes with love; but it is the privilege of the favourite actor alone to meet with that friendly, indulgent, affectionate recognition that seems to proceed from a sort of genial yearning towards the person who has solaced you in your moments of depression—a kind of gratitude for hours of pleasure enjoyed without alloy, and remembered without regret. (Applause.) The eminent barrister, the

learned judge, the general, the divine, may all, in the exercise of their various professions, have trodden in some way upon the toes of your interests. The lawyer may have lost you a cause—the judge may have misdirected a jury against you—the general may have omitted your son's or brother's name in his despatches—even the very divine himself may have made you feel uncomfortable in your boots from the pulpit; but when did you find Keeley, or dear little Robson—(applause)—misdirect a jury? When did Webster or Compton lose you your money in a law-suit? (Laughter.) When did Paul Bedford refuse your son promotion? When did Wright or Buckstone make you uncomfortable by a homily? Never. (Applause.) Your recollections are all without drawbacks, and your associations essentially agreeable. The only feeling at all of a similarly affectionate character is, I think, that manifested towards a favourite author; and how truly did Washington Irving observe, on his visits to Westminster Abbey, that, notwithstanding the simplicity of the monuments in Poet's Corner, the visitors to the Abbey always remain longest about them. A kinder and fonder feeling, he remarks, takes the place of that cold curiosity or vague admiration with which they gaze on the splendid monuments of the great and the heroic! They linger about these as about the tombs of friends and companions, for indeed there is something of companionship between the author and the reader. Other men are known to posterity only through the medium of history, which is continually growing faint and obscure; but the intercourse between the author and his fellow-men is ever new, active, and immediate. He has lived for them more than himself—he has sacrificed surrounding enjoyments, and shut himself up from the delights of social life, that he might more intimately commune with distant minds and distant ages. Well may the world cherish his renown, for it has been purchased, not by deeds of violence and blood, but by the diligent dispensation of pleasure. Well may posterity be grateful to his memory, for he has left it an inheritance, not of empty names and sounding actions, but whole treasures of wisdom, bright gems of thought, and golden veins of language. (Applause.) With what pleasure and delight do we not point out in our streets the mighty spirits of the literary world. The historians, the philosophers, whose works we have pondered over and studied as our guides and preceptors, and still more those elegant and fanciful intellects whose lively imagi-

nations have charmed our hours of leisure, the author of 'Pelham,' the author of 'Vanity Fair,' the popular, humanising, graphic, comic, tragic, dramatic, heart-stirring, heart-soothing author of the 'Pickwick Papers' (applause), and the many other delightful writers of our day; but much as we love and respect them, and pleased as we are to greet them as they pass, with thanks in our hearts and pleasure in our countenances, there is not that same tickling about the short ribs—that indulgent chuckle, like to convivial acquaintanceship, that is felt towards the favourite actor. It would be a liberty to laugh in the face of the author of 'Eugene Aram,' however his most comic creation might suggest itself at the moment; even the recollection of Sam Weller would not justify us in grinning at the author of poor Little Nelly, and as to the historian and the philosopher, we scarcely dare walk on the same pavement with them. But how have you found yourselves greeting your favourite actor? More like a spoiled child than as a stranger. You never spoke to him in your lives, and know nothing of him off the boards, but you find yourselves talking of him as if he were your personal friend. 'There goes little Bob Keeley,' and, forgetting the disagreeable business on which you were hastening to Chancery Lane, you linger for a moment to stare at his funny little back when he has passed. You talk of Ben Webster and Little Bucky as though they were relations rather than mere stage-players, and the honourable Chairman who presided at the dinner lately given to my friend Webster, and which I regretted my professional duties prevented my attending, there gave testimony to the fact that similar friendly epithets were indulged in at the Clubs. What other class of the community dare you speak of with the same familiarity? With all your admiration for the works of Sir Edward Bulwer Lytton, would you venture to speak affectionately of him as 'Neddy Bulwer'? (Laughter.) Would you talk of 'Charley Dickens' or 'Billy Thackeray'? You would not dream of such a thing; while as to the other and graver members of society such audacity would be out of the question. Who would be bold enough, while expressing his appreciation of the great learning of the Lord Chief Justice, to call him 'Johnny Campbell'? or to designate the highly-valued Chief Baron as 'Freddy Pollock'? (Laughter.) I may safely say, no one. There is, to be sure, one man, an author, a dramatic author, well known and well appreciated, who, with precocious cunning even in

infancy, determined on securing for himself a familiar appellation from the public, and had himself christened Tom Taylor. I grant that there are and have been many among the theatrical profession whom it would be equally impossible to address with levity. I doubt, for instance, whether the most intimate friend of the grand John Kemble would have ventured, even in convivial moments, to address him as 'Jacky,' and I suspect that the nieces of the dignified Sarah Siddons would have hesitated before they addressed her, even on a race-course, as 'Aunt Sally.' (Laughter.) But these are exceptions to the rule, and the Jacks, Toms, Harrys, and Freds are as common as household words. For my own part I confess I feel actually flattered when I hear, as I have heard, a greengrocer's boy or a cabman exclaim with a broad grin, 'There goes Charley Mathews.' (Laughter.) Let the actor hug those signs of kind regard to his bosom. Let him bask in the sunshine of the present and appreciate the cordiality of his contemporaries. It is one of the strongest holds he has upon their sympathy, and, unlike the author, he has nothing to hope from posterity. It is only to the present he must look, for, alas! his popularity is but of a day. Now, how is this sympathetic feeling engendered? It is not because the favourite actor is more beloved than the favourite author. It is not that the taste for Shakespeare and the higher dramatists, general though it be, so completely pervades all classes of Englishmen as to make them bestow exclusive favour upon actors as a body—this is not the secret—for I think I may safely say, that the tired tradesman, for instance, who drops in at half-price to unbend after the labours of the day, knows more of Mark Lemon, Stirling Coyne, Bayle Bernard, and Maddison Morton, than he does of Massinger, Ford, Wycherly, and Congreve. This, then, is not the secret; but it is, I take it, that there is a genuine lasting feeling of gratitude existing towards those who supply a harmless recreation, mixed with gratification both to the mind and to the senses, without exacting effort of any kind in return to secure its full enjoyment. There are times when, from physical or mental disinclination to exertion, you would gladly go out yourselves, and leave to others the task of amusing you; times when you cannot fix your attention on the most interesting book, for there is always a certain call upon the imagination to embody and give reality to descriptions, however vividly presented by the pen. Perhaps no two persons ever formed the same

conception of a Caliban, a Falstaff, or a Meg Merrilies, from the ideas conveyed to them by the same words. The pencil and chisel fail equally to impart a perfect image to the mind. Can a picture or a statue convey, without great mental aid from the spectator, the least notion of the words that would flow from the beings they represent? No. It is the actor's province alone to present at once to the eye, the ear, and the imagination, without exertion of any kind on the part of his audience, the full embodiment of the character represented; to give the true interpretation of the poet's creation; and when surrounded by all the aids of appropriate scenery and correct costume, to stamp upon it the impress of reality. It is this that is so delightful to the care-worn mind, and which leaves so vivid an impression behind. (Applause.) If, then, I have not misstated or misrepresented the relative positions of the actor and the public, I think I have a strong case to go before a jury with. I think, gentlemen, I have got you in a corner, and that you will find yourselves on the horns of a dilemma. Either you deny the truth of the sketches I have given, and reject the actor's claim on your affection (which you can hardly do consistently with your numerous attendance here to-day), or you admit the faithfulness of my portraits, and then I think I have you fast—I have you all, as Puff says, 'at a dead lock,' and you cannot escape me. So having, as I hope, softened your hearts and awakened your sympathies, I shall proceed to strike while the iron is hot. Now beware, gentlemen, I warn you—take care of your pockets, for I am going to turn them inside out if I can. I know they are full. You are not situated like an acquaintance of mine, who, on being asked by a friend to lend him a guinea, answered briskly, 'With pleasure;' but suddenly added, 'Dear me, how unfortunate! I've only one lending sovereign, and it's out.' (Laughter.) You have your giving sovereigns in your pockets—plenty of them, and I boldly assert that now is the moment to invest them both to the fund's advantage and your own, for you will place yourselves thereby in the agreeable position I have described as belonging particularly to the actor, and not only enhance your own pleasure in meeting him, but enable him to point to you in return, with heartfelt gratitude and pleasure, as the generous friends who have assisted him in his praiseworthy work of economy and thrift—in his honest endeavour to secure for himself a small independence in the decline of his days, and helped him to that provision for his old

age, which, unassisted, he would with all his efforts have been unable to attain. Give him your friendly arm as he toddles down the hill; throw a flower in his path, and soothe the last days of a harmless life expended in your service. Emulate the noble example set you by our excellent, generous-hearted Queen—secure for yourselves a share of the applause you have heard bestowed upon the announcement of her munificent contribution—come liberally to the relief of the poor actor, and, reversing the old words of Shakespeare, give to him that which not impoverisheth you, but makes him rich indeed. Gentlemen, I propose to you, 'Prosperity to the General Theatrical Fund,' coupling with it the name of Mr. Buckstone as its Treasurer." (Tremendous cheering.)

Later in the evening the health of the Chairman was proposed by Mr. Buckstone, and in reply the Chairman said:

"GENTLEMEN,—I really find myself at a loss to express the gratification I have experienced at the honour you have done me, and the cordial manner in which it has been done, as well as for the friendly observations that have been dropped by my worthy and much-esteemed friend, Mr. Buckstone. This is some compensation to me for the sufferings and anxieties which I have experienced. I will not inflict upon you the oft-told tale of my difficulties—I have given you all my tediousness before—those difficulties which arose from my original sin of entering upon the large and ungrateful speculation of managing Covent Garden Theatre. (Hear, hear, and laughter.) My life since has been sacrificed to the difficulties and responsibilities that have resulted from it, and which have continually haunted me, and I suppose will last to the end of my existence. (No, no.) The late Douglas Jerrold once said to me that he did not despair of living to see the day when I should be found walking up Ludgate Hill on a muddy morning, with a cotton umbrella under my arm, to invest my funds in the Bank of England. (Laughter.) I am sorry to say that Douglas Jerrold did not live to see that vision realised. The only step that I have advanced towards it is, that I have bought the umbrella. (Cheers and laughter.) I mean to say that I have this day emancipated myself from the category of fingerposts, and I have taken a step in the right direction. I have applied to be admitted a member of the Royal General Theatrical Fund, and this I think will

be the best provision for a rainy day that I can find. (Laughter.) Perhaps I am rather an old fingerpost to go into leading-strings, but still I hope I may say, 'Better late than never.' Who knows but that one day I may be enabled to get admitted to one of the snug little houses of the Royal Dramatic College, which have been referred to by my friend Mr. Buckstone? If so, I shall be happy to see as many of my friends around me as my little parlour will hold. (Laughter.) I will now propose to you, gentlemen, 'The Drama,' and if you will allow me, I will associate with it the name of a gentleman, one of its most industrious supporters, a consummate actor, an efficient manager, a true friend to this fund, and to all other projects having for their view the interest of his profession or the welfare of his professional brethren, and who, in addition to all this, has now an extra claim on your praise for having presented to the metropolis one of the most elegant and commodious theatres in which the drama can find a home. (Cheers.) Gentlemen, I propose to you, with 'The Drama,' the 'Health of Mr. Benjamin Webster, and success to the New Adelphi Theatre.'" (Loud cheering.)

SPEECH AT COVENT GARDEN BENEFIT, JAN. 4, 1870.

"LADIES AND GENTLEMEN,—Now I appeal to you, isn't it worth a voyage to Australia to draw forth such an overwhelming, and I may say unprecedented, display as that of this morning? I don't know which is the most complimentary, the most gratifying to my feelings—the cordial demonstration from the brilliant assemblage before the curtain, or the friendly co-operation and good fellowship of the galaxy of talent behind it. (Applause.) It almost shakes my determination to leave you, and makes me feel inclined to go on taking benefits every morning for the next twelve months. But perhaps this would not be wise. Who knows but, after a few months, my friends might get weary of me?—so I don't think I will venture that experiment. (Laughter.) I have over and over again experienced the kindness of the public, and, under all sorts of circumstances, have been cheered by their favour and patronage, though certainly not in so marked a manner as in this instance; but I have never before met with so remarkable a manifestation of good feeling, such an utter abnegation of self on the

part of my professional brethren, as has been exhibited to-day. To find the most distinguished artists of our time content to hide their candle under a bushel—I'm the bushel—playing the most insignificant parts with perfect good humour, even shaking their heads without uttering a word—though, without uttering a word, you will admit that a most flowery (flour-y) speech has been made—is a compliment I can never forget, and the remembrance of which I shall carry across the ocean under my waistcoat, next my heart of hearts. (Cheers.) It not only proves the truth of Sheridan's remark that, 'When they *do* agree upon the stage, their unanimity is wonderful,' but it indicates a personal regard, which is more valuable to me than the most elaborately-clothed expressions of professional esteem. Albeit not given to the melting mood, I am almost tempted to be sentimental on the occasion, but it is out of my line; and I would not mar the merriment of the morning by a serious and formally-concocted set speech. I have no wish, ladies and gentlemen, to bring your pocket-handkerchiefs into requisition; I shall see enough salt water by-and-by without that. (Laughter.) No; it has been a merry meeting, and I would have it a merry parting, trusting, at no distant period, to have an equally merry return. Oh, I am not unmindful of my return, believe me; the human mind generally looks forward, and, as a proof, I beg to inform you, here in good time, that I have already accepted an engagement at the Haymarket on my arrival. Tickets may be secured at the box office by telegraph a year in advance. (Laughter.) After all, I am not going so very far—only to the Antipodes; and what is that in these days? A tour in the provinces, nothing more, with a casual peep at Egypt, and a possible glimpse of India and China *en passant*—to many people a delightful little excursion, even without the temptation of profit tacked to it; while I have a double inducement in the hope of having pleasure and profit combined. Besides, I am no stranger to the 'overland route;' I ought to be quite at home in it, having had a run of two hundred nights on board a P. and O. steamer at the Haymarket only a few years ago. (Cheers.) But I should be perfectly satisfied with a much shorter run this time, and, not being a manager, a run of six weeks will be quite as much as I desire. Once safely landed at Melbourne, I have no fear of meeting with a kind reception from those who have so often given me pressing invitations to visit their shores. The only anxiety on my mind will

be the natural one of how they will like me when they get me there. In this sensational age, it is somewhat daring to risk a journey of fifteen thousand miles to play simple comedies and farces, without the now indispensable adjuncts of fires, murders, wrecks, daring leaps, awful headers, and crashing railway engines; where there is no chance for scene-painters, machinists, lime-lights, hansom cabs, red fire, or moonlight bridges. How if I should not hit the taste of our Antipodean friends? What's to be done then? Well, I suppose I must buy a kangaroo, and come home again. As the man said when bound for Jerusalem: 'If I can't convert the Jews, I can buy an Arabian horse.' (Laughter.) I remember a story of Sir Walter Scott's, of a young medical practitioner in Perth, who, tired of waiting for practice in his native city, announced that he had determined to emigrate to Australia. 'Australia!' said his friend; 'what on earth for? Why, there are nothing but kangaroos there!' 'Well,' said he, 'isn't their money as good as anybody else's?' So, if all else fail, I shall have to fall back upon the aborigines, and see if I can't persuade them to put their hands in their pouches. At all events, if our brethren on the other side of the globe do not find me exactly the commodity they want, they can't say that I am a mere ephemeral flimsy kickshaw, furbished up to impose upon the colonial market. I may fall short of their expectations, but I am at least genuine of my kind—a long-tried, well-seasoned article, warranted sound, and fit for immediate exportation. (Great cheering.) And now, ladies and gentlemen, the time has arrived when I am to bid you adieu; but, before doing so, I must advert to one most extraordinary circumstance connected with this occasion. I cannot resist referring to the remarkable fact that, perhaps for the first time in the history of the stage—at any rate of the modern stage—this benefit has come off without a single poster, board, bill, or playbill of any description having been issued, and that, with the exception of the programmes distributed in the house this morning, and the simple announcement in the newspapers, not an intimation of any kind has been given to the public. (Applause.) Now this is a step in the right direction. Time was when my bills were flying all over the town, but now I am happy to say that I leave England without a single bill out. (Laughter.) In a few days I shall take my departure, and as it may be a satisfaction to my friends to know that my comfort and happiness will be ensured during my peregrinations, as

far as anything can be ensured in this world, I will, with your permission, present to you a guarantee that I shall have all the consolation man can desire in the sweet society and affectionate solicitude of a beloved companion. Here is the guarantee" (leading forward Mrs. C. Mathews, amid loud cheering). "Ladies and gentlemen, allow me, in the name of my wife and myself, to bid you, respectfully and gratefully, farewell."

DINNER TO CHARLES J. MATHEWS PREVIOUS TO THE AUSTRALIAN TRIP, MONDAY, JAN. 10, 1870.

CHARLES MATHEWS said, from the chair:

"The most important task assigned to me has now to be fulfilled, and I rise to propose what is called the toast of the evening with a most singular mixture of pleasure and trepidation. I was going to say that I was placed in not only a novel but an unprecedented position, by being asked to occupy the chair to-day. But it is not so. There is nothing new in saying that there is nothing new; and I find in *The Times* newspaper of October 3, 1798, an advertisement of a dinner given to Mr. Fox at the Shakespeare Tavern, Covent Garden, on the anniversary of his first election for Westminster: 'The Hon. Charles James Fox in the chair.' Here is a great precedent; and what was done in 1798 by Charles James Fox is only imitated in 1870 by Charles James Mathews. I venture to assert, and I think I may do so without vanity, that a fitter man than myself to propose the health of our guest could not be found; for I venture also emphatically to affirm that there is no man so well acquainted with the merits and demerits of that gifted individual as I am. (Laughter and cheers.) I have been on the most intimate terms with him from his earliest youth. (Laughter.) I have watched over and assisted his progress from childhood upwards—(much laughter)—have shared in all his joys and griefs, and I assert boldly, and am proud to have this opportunity of publicly declaring, that there is not a man on earth for whom I entertain so sincere a regard and affection. (Laughter.) Indeed, I don't think I go too far in stating that he has an equal affection for me. (Laughter.) He has come to me for advice over and over again, under the most embarrassing circumstances—(laughter)—and, what is still more remarkable, he has always taken my advice

in preference to that of anyone else. (Renewed laughter.) But, having got thus far, I find myself stopped by a most formidable difficulty. After having declared myself the bosom friend of our distinguished guest, I fear that the high encomiums I feel it my duty as well as my inclination to pile upon him wholesale may be open to suspicion—I may be accused of partiality. Those stupendous compliments which I consider so strictly his due—(laughter)—may be considered fulsome and overdone—the foolish emanations of a too ardent admirer. (Laughter.) No, gentlemen, in justice to my friend I must leave to others the showering of those elaborately-constructed eulogies which cannot fail to rain upon the head of the beloved companion of my youth, fearing only that, as no one but myself knows half his amiable qualities, his wonderful gifts, his astounding talents, and his resplendent genius, no one will be found capable of doing half justice to the merits of this remarkable man. Gentlemen, with much regret I delegate the delightful privilege of my position to someone who, I hope, will not flinch from the bestowal of any compliment that may occur to him." (Cheers.)

The health of the Chairman was proposed by Mr. G. A. Sala, and in reply Mathews said:

"GENTLEMEN,—Nothing appears at first sight so easy as to return thanks for compliments bestowed and benefits received; but when the compliments are such as I have had heaped upon me during the last few days, and the benefit I had given me last Tuesday morning—(cheers)—it is no such easy matter to find expressions sufficiently glowing to convey the sense of gratification and pleasure experienced. I have been thanking my good friends in the provinces almost every day for the last month, and have exhausted all imaginable forms of speech in acknowledgment of their long-continued favours, and now that the crowning honour comes upon me, I really find as if I were unable to get out a word. The fact is, the occasion is too much for me—I am out of my depth. (Cheers.) The applause of a crowded theatre is intensely exciting, and frequently unmans the actor; but when such marks of kindness as I have received are given over and over again, and in so many unexpected ways, it is simply impossible to give utterance to the feelings they inspire. It is lucky that 'the proudest moment of my life'—(laughter)—is a forbidden phrase to-night, or I

certainly should be tempted to adopt it. Don't, pray don't expect me to return thanks—I can't do it. I have been petted and spoilt since the first moment I put my foot upon the stage; but such signal proofs of personal regard I never counted on, and am not prepared to meet. It is more like the affection of intimate friends than the approbation of the public, and the good wishes expressed, I am sensibly gratified to fancy, are as much for the man as for the actor. (Loud cheering.) This is the real touchstone of my position—this it is that lifts it out of the common. I have tried the public sorely in my time; I have taken liberties with them of every description; I have flown in the face of their prejudices; but there is one thing I have never feared or failed to do—I have always taken them frankly into my confidence, and in all my troubles have told them the truth without disguise, and thrown myself upon their protection. (Cheers.) This has brought about a sort of bond between us—they have always sympathised with me, and after such knock-down blows as would have caused many backers to throw up the sponge—(laughter)—they have invariably set me on my legs again and cheered me on to victory. I am now going to break new ground—(cheers)—and I think no man ever did so with more pats on the back than I have had, and I only hope that the unexampled honours conferred upon me may not lead our friends in Australia to expect a phenomenon. If 'to hold the mirror up to nature' be the legitimate end and purpose of playing, that, and that alone, is what I have aspired to do—nothing more. I have never held up a magnifying glass to her—I have never tried 'to make the unskilful laugh,' but I have done my best to 'give the very age and body of the time, its form and pressure.' When I first came upon the stage I found everything conventional. I don't presume to say that I reformed it, but in my own particular and limited line I, for the first time, broke through the old conventionalities, and have lived to see my example followed till they are all nearly, if not quite, exploded. The tendency of the present age, indeed, is rather the other way. Instead of a magnifying glass there is rather too great a love for the microscope—an overweening elaboration of small details. Reality has become a disease, and the spectator is no longer called upon to 'piece out the imperfections of the stage with his imagination,' but is presented with what is often too real for stage illusion. Paint and cast-iron go hand in hand, and

many things that should only be suggested are now made obtrusively prominent. It is a fast age, and as the eye is faster than the ear, it has become necessary to cater for the one more than for the other. But, however, this is nothing new. In the times of Garrick and of Kemble the town occasionally ran mad after kickshaws, and deserted for a time their wholesome food; but they always came back again to their beef and pudding. Well, I hope when I return from Australia that my little dishes may still be palatable, and that the taste for homely cookery may not have altogether departed. (Cheers.) Gentlemen, before concluding, I cannot but allude to the shameful usage I have received from the press. (Laughter.) It is a painful subject to touch upon, but really the columns upon columns of undeserved praise that have been lavished upon me, and which have evidently been maliciously concocted with a view to injure me in the colonies—(laughter)—by raising expectations that never can be realised, call for my vehement protestation. (Laughter.) In other words, I most gratefully acknowledge their kindness, and only wish that I felt myself worthy of the flattering notices they have given me. It is not every man who is allowed the privilege during his lifetime of reading such panegyrics as are usually delayed till after he has shuffled off his mortal coil. 'De mortuis nil nisi bonum' has been long accepted; but 'De viventibus' is not often carried out so thoroughly as in my instance. As to the committee who have worked night and day in my cause, I can only hope that virtue is its own reward, for no other reward can I assign them. If I had been their own kith and kin they could not have been more indefatigable in their exertions—certainly not more successful in their results. I have done—not because I have nothing more to say—but because I have not the power to say it. If I have been dull, forgive me. We cannot always be on the broad grin, and I submit that this is one of the occasions when the most lively may be permitted for a moment to be serious. Gentlemen, from my heart of hearts, I thank you." (Loud and enthusiastic cheering, prolonged for some minutes.)

SPEECH AT THE DINNER OF THE YORICK CLUB, MELBOURNE, MARCH 28, 1870.

CHARLES JAMES MATHEWS was entertained, on 28th March, at dinner, by the Yorick Club; Mr. J. W. Rusden, one of the trustees, in the chair. In reply to the toast of the evening, Mr. Mathews, who rose amid a storm of cheering, said:

"GENTLEMEN,—To say that I am flattered by the compliment that I have been paid to-night, and by the many civil things that your president has lavished upon me, would but very ill express my gratification at this gathering. I expected to meet with kindness and politeness, but I was not prepared for the truly hearty and friendly reception that has greeted me. I don't know, I can't fancy, that I am in a strange land—(cheers)—or that I am being received by strangers. (No, no.) Everything seems as familiar as if I had been here all my life, and everyone treats me as if I had known them from my childhood. (Vehement cries of 'So you have,' and cheers.) From the moment I set foot on shore, and walked up Collins Street, I seemed to be instantly recognised as if I had been in Liverpool or Manchester, and every shopkeeper welcomed me as though I had been only parted from them last week. This is what gladdens a man's heart—perhaps tickles his fancy—but makes him feel at home at once. (Great cheering.) It makes a man ask why is it that this meeting has been put off so long? How is it that I have neglected such friends, who have expected me so many years, and are so glad to see me at last? (Cheers.) I am to blame, I acknowledge that frankly; and I can only say that I will never do so any more. (Laughter.) As to the voyage that I looked forward to with so much horror, why it was nonsense. (Laughter and cheering.) What I sarcastically called before starting a mere pleasure trip, has turned out to be such an one indeed. What with music, dancing, private theatricals, glorious weather, and no letters to answer — (laughter) — what could a man desire more? Since my arrival in Melbourne, my chief labour has been shaking hands, and listening to pleasant things, said by pleasant people. That I find no hard task. Of course I had to respond to the usual questions. 'Are you not surprised at Melbourne?' 'How do you like our town?' 'Have you seen our

Town Hall, our Parliament Houses, and—our gaol?' (Much laughter.) Of course these were necessities that I had to comply with, and followed by the usual remarks and encomiums of Sydney harbour, and winding up with, 'only to think, thirty-five years ago the white man had not set his foot here.' (Laughter and cheers.) Of course I had to confess that I was not surprised; it was what I expected; I knew it all beforehand. Why, Melbourne is as well known and appreciated in London as London is in Melbourne. (Hear, hear.) No, I was not surprised. After all, thirty-five years is a good long time, you know. With plenty of money, a great deal can be done in thirty-five years. I was myself fully developed long before I was thirty-five. (Laughter for some time.) Nobody was surprised at me. (Renewed laughter.) When Melbourne gets to my age, think what it will be then. (Laughter and cheers.) That will be something worth witnessing. I only hope I shall be here to see it. (Cheers, and cries of 'We hope so too.') In the meantime, I mean to avail myself of all the enjoyments that offer. I hope in return to merit the kindness and hospitality I have received; and if in getting into work I only afford you the entertainment you expect, why the gratification will be mutual. (Cheers.) You have taken me on faith to-night. (Enthusiastic cries, 'We know you of old,' and cheering.) It shall go hard indeed if I do not come up to your expectations. I will do my best, and no man can do more. As to Mr. Rusden's calling me by my christian-name, that is the greatest compliment that can be conferred upon me. I never felt more pleased than when, coming from the opera the other night, the mob called out, 'Bravo, Charley!' (Cheers.) Gentlemen, I won't detain you any longer. I thank you very sincerely, and I beg to propose 'Prosperity to the Yorick Club.'" (Long and repeated cheering.)

SPEECH AT THE DINNER OF THE ATHENÆUM CLUB, MELBOURNE, MARCH 30, 1870.

"GENTLEMEN,—I feel myself really and unaffectedly at a loss for words. I have been ransacking the dictionary for superlatives, and have completely exhausted it. I have used up every expression of thanks that can be found for the kindness I have received, and here

I am once more complimented and flattered rather more than ever —(laughter)—and requiring more than ever the choicest expressions of the English language to express to you the sense I feel of the honour you have done me. Such hearty demonstrations of kindness and goodwill are most gratifying to my feelings. They put me on good terms with myself. I really begin to feel proud of my own acquaintance. (Laughter.) I have some compunctions at not having sooner discovered my importance. If I grow vain, the fault will be with you; you have given me reason to be so. I can't be blamed for over-praising the article on which you have stamped so high a value. Last night I went to the Parliament House. (Groans.) My kind friend, Mr. Aspinall, had already escorted me through them in the morning, when I was highly delighted with all I saw, especially the library, which is truly admirable. I went there last night in the hope of getting a lesson in elocution—(laughter)—which might be of service to me this evening, or of picking up some pretty little choice phrases to assist me to-night. However, I was unsuccessful. (Laughter.) The cordial thanks returned by Mr. M'Kean, the Minister of Lands, for the compliments paid him by Mr. Mackay—(great laughter)—and the gratitude of Mr. Jones for the panegyric passed on him by Mr. M'Kean—(roars of laughter)—have really not been serviceable to me. (Renewed laughter.) I therefore fall back upon my own native eloquence, feeling the examples set me agreeable only from a political, or rather parliamentary, point of view. To be sure, I must not forget that I am at the Antipodes; perhaps, after all, what I take to be compliment may be, in fact, sarcasm. (Great laughter.) Well, who knows? Where things are all topsy-turvy, of course everything must be reversed. Why, how can a man like me here judge of anything he hears or sees? It is simply impossible. When I read that the Autumn races will take place in April, that the Spring meeting commences in September, and am told to look out for the middle of winter in July, and midsummer at Christmas; that the north wind is hot, and the south wind cold—how am I to draw the line? Why, of course when I find the glass rapidly rising I know I ought naturally to look out for wet weather; and when I look at the setting sun I turn my face towards the east. (Laughter.) Of course I look on a magpie as a token of luck; I regard a horse-shoe as the most unlucky thing in the world, and I make a point of never

sitting down to dinner unless there are thirteen people at table. In fact, the rule of contrary is my sole guide. I only hope when I see every seat let for my first appearance, that it won't be a sign that I am going to play to empty benches. (Laughter and applause.) That would be a reverse which I assure you I should not relish. I am most anxious to play before an Australian audience. It will be a new sensation, though in spite of all Captain Standish has said, I begin to doubt whether there is a real Australian, for all here—literally all the people I have met—appear to be English. I seem to have known them all, and they all seem to know me. (Cheers.) Some of them I must have seen before, and only now renew the acquaintance. I suppose I have really met with nearly everyone before. (Applause.) As for the phrases, 'I believe you knew my uncle,' 'My brother was a friend of your father's nephew,' 'My sister knew your uncle,' 'Your cousin married my wife's uncle's widow,' 'My uncle knew your father's second cousin,' why, things of that kind meet me in every mouth. Also I have remembrances that 'I lived next door to you at Fulham,' 'I supped at the same hotel with you in Manchester,' 'I once went into the Lyceum with an order, to see you play'—(great laughter)—'My brother-in-law had the pleasure of serving you with a writ in Covent Garden.' (Laughter.) These are details of what constantly occurs. (Laughter.) Even begging-letters are not wanting. They remind one of the mother country. (Laughter.) Their claims are indisputable. 'I had the honour of playing at York the day after you finished your engagement—lend me five shillings'—(laughter)—'My father was property-man at Drury Lane when you were playing at the Haymarket—lend me half-a-crown'—(renewed laughter)—'I lodged at the same house at Manchester the week before you came to it—five-and-sixpence.' Such touches of nature make the whole world kin. (Great laughter.) Even the places here smell of England. When once I have driven through Brighton, Kew, Richmond, Sunbury, Malmesbury, and Windsor, with an occasional trip to Balaclava and Heidelberg, it is difficult to believe I am fifteen thousand miles away from my godfathers and godmothers, and all such-like. (Applause.) I have truly enjoyed myself during the few days I have passed in the colony. No doubt the longer I stay the more I shall like it; at any rate, I shall never forget the cordiality with which I have been received. If my public reception is only half as good as

that I have met with in private, I shall be perfectly satisfied. Allow me to return you my most sincere thanks for your kindness, and to propose, 'Prosperity to the Athenæum Club.'" (Cheers.)

SIR WALTER SCOTT CENTENARY DINNER.

EARLY in the summer of 1871, a meeting of gentlemen was held in Montreal for the purpose of devising means for the due celebration of the centenary anniversary of the birth of Sir Walter Scott. At this meeting a committee was appointed, and a number of conferences took place on the subject. It was found, however, that owing to the season of the year at which the anniversary occurred, and the fact that many persons were absent from the city with their families, it would be difficult to ensure such a public demonstration as would be worthy of so important an event. The general public celebration was therefore abandoned, and, instead, the founding of a "Scott Scholarship" in the University of McGill was resolved upon.

It was still, however, felt by a number of gentlemen that there should at least be something more to mark the centenary anniversary of so great a man as Sir Walter Scott; and while considering the matter an event occurred which led to the dinner at St. James's Club. Mr. Charles Mathews had accepted and was fulfilling an engagement at the Theatre Royal. The suggestion was made that if he, a contemporary and personal friend of Sir Walter Scott, could be induced to lend his assistance, something might be done. He was consulted on the subject, and the result was the dinner at St. James's Club House, particulars of which are here given. Less formal than some demonstrations which took place elsewhere, the circumstance of Mr. Mathews's presence at this dinner, and the personal references to Sir Walter Scott which he was able to make, render the St. James's Club dinner worthy of record among the many demonstrations which marked the general reverence for the memory of a great and good man.—*From the Official Report.*

The chair was occupied (by request) by Mr. Charles Mathews, who, in giving the toast of the evening, said:

"GENTLEMEN,—Under any other circumstances, I should begin by apologising for placing myself in the onerous position I now occupy;

but since you have done me the honour to invite me to it, I conclude that it is not only a compliment to myself but a pleasure to you to see me here. (Cheers.) With this flattering unction I confidently plunge into the task I have undertaken. I will not say that I am unfitted for it, for that would be casting a slur upon your judgment in electing me; but in doing so (knowing me so well), you will not, I am sure, have reckoned on any brilliant display of eloquence on the occasion, but will be content to hear me address you in my own gossiping way, and allow me to chatter on with you as among old friends, instead of astonishing you with any elaborate bursts of oratory, carefully prepared, as for a grave and formal assembly. (Hear, hear.) There is no doubt that I ought, by right, to be a Scotchman to-night; but here in Canada that necessity is not so strong as it would be at home, seeing that abroad the distinction between Scotch, English, and Irish is not so marked. Here we are all 'Britishers;' and after all, the works of the great man whose centenary we celebrate are in reality cosmopolitan—belonging to no country, to no nationality—as well appreciated in England, Ireland, France, Italy, Germany, and wherever a printing-press is to be found, as they are in Scotland itself. (Cheers.) I am quite aware that no Scotchman will allow this. To him it is an impertinence, almost an insult, to hear an Englishman pretend to relish Scott or Burns or Hogg; but in spite of his natural wish to appropriate to himself and his own country the mighty genius who sprang up from their midst, it is in vain that he attempts to exclude the whole civilised world from participating in his enthusiasm. (Hear, hear.) That many of the choicest bits of humour, the most characteristic points of his novels, are lost to the foreigner is unquestionable; they must, of course, be better enjoyed by his own countrymen who thoroughly understand every idiomatic expression. But fortunately his beauties are not confined to such minutiæ. Even his Scotch novels are not wholly dependent upon such small matters as the correct transcript of his natural dialect. You might as well say that no man can enjoy 'Les Mystères de Paris' who is not thoroughly conversant with the argot of the Tapis Franc. (Hear, hear.) It is the truth of his descriptions and of his characters, his adherence to nature, the interest of his stories, the purity of his style, the character of his sentiments, and the charming sweetness which pervades all his writings, that make him not only understood, but admired and beloved

by readers of all nations. (Cheers.) Besides—although Scotland owes him a debt of undying gratitude for having been the first to blazon forth her history—to unveil her local beauties, and illustrate her habits, her peculiarities, her romance, her superstitions, making her the object of countless pilgrimages—filling her hills and lochs with thousands of tourists from every land, anxious to visit the various localities which his pen has immortalised—to penetrate the haunts of 'Rob Roy'—to explore the Trosachs, and behold the lovely scenes of 'The Lady of the Lake'—to gaze upon the hundred spots peopled with his creations—Stirling, Holyrood, the Grass Market, Mushat's Cairn—places unnoticed and uncared for until his genius connected them with King James and Rizzio, with Jeanie and Effie Deans—let it be remembered that it is not Scotland alone that has been vivified by his magic wand. (Hear, hear.) The histories of England and of France have been equally subjected to his delightful treatment; and if his 'Lady of the Lake,' 'Marmion,' 'Rob Roy,' 'Guy Mannering,' 'Heart of Mid-Lothian,' and so many others endear him to Scotland, his 'Ivanhoe,' 'Nigel,' 'Peveril,' 'Quentin Durward,' and others make him equally dear to England and France, and thus we all claim kindred. (Cheers.) If Shakespeare was 'not for an age, but for all time,' so Scott was not for a nation, but for the world at large. (Cheers.) He was the pioneer of a new epoch in literature. What was the state of things before he burst upon the world? The novels of Smollett and Fielding, admirable as they were, had become too coarse for the delicacy of the age, as those of Pigault Lebrun had become in France. The Sir Charles Grandisons and Clarissa Harlowes of Richardson, sinning in the opposite extreme, had grown wearisome from their conventional and stilted affectation of over-delicacy; while the namby-pamby productions of the Minerva Press had brought novels into such disrepute that they were forbidden articles, and their perusal was not only held as pernicious, but their readers were actually objects of ridicule, the character of Lydia Languish having been expressly written by Sheridan to represent the type of the young ladies who indulged in them. The inflated romances of the Miss Porters were certainly less objectionable, but were fantastic and unreliable—unreal and unprofitable; and the wild creations of Ann Radcliffe were mere vehicles for exciting the imagination and harrowing the feelings. Miss Burney, Miss Austin, and Miss Edgeworth were undoubtedly

writers of higher merit, but it was reserved for Scott to strike out a new vein—to create a new era in composition—to give works of fiction a higher character—to combine with interest of story, with truth of history and accuracy of detail, the elegance of diction and the terseness of the essayist—the stamp of nature—the perfect delineation of character without exaggeration—the inculcation of the soundest, sweetest, and most unaffected morality—so artistically blended that you have at once the charm of the novelist with the precision of the historian. (Cheers.) The effect of his first book was electric—a flash of lightning. It struck home to all hearts; it was a revelation. He was not aware of what he had done himself. On sending the first published copy of Waverley to his friend Morritt, he speaks of it as 'a small anonymous sort of a novel'—says that he began it long ago—mislaid the manuscript for some time—found it in an old cabinet—took a fancy to it, and wrote the last two volumes in three weeks. He did not expect it to be popular, he said, in the south, as much of the humour was local. He did not put his name to it, fearing so trifling a work might injure his reputation as a poet. He never for a moment imagined that the novelist was doomed to throw the poet into the shade, and that in a short time all Europe would ring with the fame of this 'trifling anonymous sort of a novel,' and the centennial celebration of the author's birthday be observed wherever civilisation extended. (Cheers.) For twenty years he proceeded from success to success, from triumph to triumph, producing some thirty matchless works, which have been translated into every European language, and have never been surpassed. He founded a school which has given us countless worthy disciples, enriching our literature with admirable works of fiction—novels which as he himself says, he may surely claim as the style

> 'Which he was born to introduce,
> Refined it first and showed its use.'

But I am telling you nothing but what you know better than myself, and as Sneer says in 'The Critic'—'If Sir Walter *knows* all this, why does Sir Christopher go on telling him?' and he is right. So I'll turn at once to what you don't know, and, as briefly as I can, give you one or two personal reminiscences. It is not vanity that prompts me to introduce myself into the subject, but an excusable pride; for if a Scotchman is proud of being Scott's townsman, or even his country-

man—of having been born in the same hemisphere—surely I may be pardoned for feeling equal pride in having been honoured with his intimacy—of having visited him in Edinburgh, and been his guest at Abbotsford. (Cheers.) The first time I had the gratification of meeting him was on a memorable occasion. It was at a breakfast with Lord Byron in his rooms at Long's Hotel. Scott, Terry, my father, and myself made up the party. How I came there I don't know—being then a mere boy of twelve or thirteen; but I suppose my father managed it for me, and I have never forgotten it. I was all eyes and ears. Byron and Scott were both in high spirits, and it was a meeting to remember. Scott mentions it in his diary, and says it was the last time he ever met Byron. Little did I think then that nearly sixty years afterwards I should be presiding at the centenary of his birth at Montreal. The next day my father and myself accompanied him to Kenilworth and Warwick, and had the delight of roaming through the ruins with the distinguished man who was afterwards to expand and perfect his observations in the splendid novel founded upon them. The next time it was my good fortune to meet him was six or seven years later, at another equally interesting breakfast. It was at Sir Francis Chantrey's, when he was sitting for the admirable bust that you all know so well. Chantrey stood at work at one corner of the room, while Scott, drawn out by my father and one or two others (Allan Cunningham I think was one), kept us in a constant state of delight by his endless anecdotes and pleasantries, his face lighting up at each sally with that comic expression so exquisitely caught and transferred to marble by Chantrey. (Cheers.) There is in the bust a play about the long upper lip and a twinkle of the eye that conveys the exact expression of Scott when on the point of delivering some touch of humour. On my return from Italy, I think in 1825, I again met him at a memorable dinner-party, at James Ballantyne's house, in Edinburgh, in company with Jeffrey, Wilson, Peter Robertson, Playfair, and other notabilities; and I remember with pleasure Sir Walter in his diary mentions the occasion, and speaks of me as having 'grown up a nice lad, who sang songs of his own composing, in the style of Colman and James Smith, with much spirit.' Many a time after did I dine with him in Castle Street, and was honoured with an invitation to stay with him at Abbotsford—visiting Dryburgh and Melrose, as I had previously done Hawthornden

and Roslyn with the great Sir Walter for a cicerone. (Cheers.) But to what is all this tending? perhaps you will say. Well, I will tell you, and confess that I had a private object in view when I took the chair this evening. I am by profession an actor; but I am not *only* an actor, I am an ardent lover of the art I profess, and being often pained by hearing derogatory remarks respecting it, I am only too glad to seize upon any opportunity of exalting it in the eyes of the world. Now this was an occasion I could not let slip. There is no greater guarantee for the worthiness of a thing than the estimation in which it is held by men we honour and respect; and there never was a more enthusiastic admirer and supporter of the drama than Sir Walter Scott. From his earliest youth to his latest hour he took the liveliest interest in its welfare, and derived the greatest pleasure from the society of its most distinguished professors—John Kemble, Mrs. Siddons, Charles Young, my father, his dear and long-cherished friend and companion Terry, William Murray, the excellent Edinburgh manager, Charles Mackay, the Scotch actor, pronounced by Sir Walter the perfect representative on the stage of his delicious creation of the Bailie Nicol Jarvie, and hosts of others, whom he always spoke of in the most friendly and frequently in the most affectionate terms of regard. 'I delight,' says he in his diary, 'in these professional men of talent. They always give you some new lights by the peculiarity of their habits and studies—so different from the people who are rounded and smoothed and ground down for conversation, and who can say all that every other person says—and nothing more.' He recalls his first visit to a theatre after fifty years, and says that he had not since passed many hours of such unmixed delight, and even wonders that people having the means do not constantly spend their evenings at the theatre. He bought a share in the Theatre Royal, Edinburgh, and for many years took an active part in its management —even superintending the rehearsal of one or two dramas founded on his own novels. And now I come to the crowning honour conferred by him upon the theatrical profession. On the establishment of the fund for the relief of decayed actors in Edinburgh, Sir Walter was asked to take the chair at the first dinner given in aid of the subscription list of the new charity; and here, in the presence of some three hundred gentlemen—here at a meeting of poor actors, after twenty years of mystery—the Great Unknown, the Great Magician,

the Wizard of the North, confessed his secret, and for the first time, openly avowed himself the author of the Waverley Novels! Was not this a triumph for my profession? (Cheers.) After having shrouded his secret for so many years from the whole world; after having point-blank denied the authorship to his sovereign, George IV., who once indiscreetly asked him the question, he selected a meeting of actors for the important disclosure with which the newspapers teemed for weeks, and which was received with interest by the whole civilised world. (Cheers.) This was the fact I wished to remind you of—an event which will ever be remembered by the members of my profession as one of the most gratifying compliments they have ever received, and which must, I think, surely exalt that profession in the estimation of the public. (Cheers.)

"I have done, gentlemen, and I hope I have not trespassed too long upon your patience. I will now give you the toast of the evening: The hundredth anniversary of the day which gave birth to one of the greatest men that ever adorned society—who, next to Shakespeare, has entwined himself around the hearts of his fellow-men—whose pen was never polluted by an unworthy or a coarse expression—whose works were invariably distinguished by the clearest spirit of honour, the most unaffected homage to religion—the most refined taste, the most chivalrous generosity of sentiment, and were throughout marked by good feeling and good sense. All honour to the day which gave birth to a great author and a good man!" (Cheers.)

FAREWELL ADDRESS AT WALLACK'S THEATRE, NEW YORK, MAY 1, 1872.

"LADIES AND GENTLEMEN,—It is with the greatest pleasure that I come before you to say farewell. This may appear a rather novel and somewhat ungracious announcement of a parting speech, but when I explain what I mean I am sure you will sympathise with me. The fact is, I feel like a little boy going home for the holidays, and you all know what a little boy, like myself, feels on such an occasion. However fond of study he may be, if he is a good little boy, like myself, and however happy he may have been at school, he still looks forward with rapture to the period of his vacation. Now I have been at work for the last two years without any holiday at all. Indeed, I

may say without a day's relaxation; for I don't count the time passed on board ship as relaxation—though I have felt a little relaxed even there at times—nor do I look upon the days and nights spent on the railway cars as unalloyed bliss, those having been the only cessations from labour in which I have indulged. There are people, I know, who enjoy the sea—at least, they say they do—but I confess I am not one of them; and after making a voyage round the world I have come to the conclusion that I was not cut out for a sailor, and, luxurious as the Pullman sleeping-berths undoubtedly are, I have no hesitation in asserting that in the long run I prefer my own bed. So, having worked hard, I think I have fairly earned my holiday, and I mean to enjoy it. I have not the slightest intention of returning to England and resuming work till next October, but mean to take three or four months for an unshackled 'outing.' This being the case, I repeat that it is with pleasure I come forward to say farewell. But I should not feel pleasure in saying so if I did not entertain the hope that we should some day meet again. Thirty-four years ago I bade New York farewell 'for ever,' and after twenty years' absence returned and said farewell again. Thirteen years then elapsed, and here I am saying farewell for the third time, and who knows how soon I may be making my fourth appearance and delivering my fourth farewell? It is true I am not so young as I was—in fact, I am no longer in my first youth, but then I am not yet in my second childhood either, and a trip across the Atlantic is now so simple a circumstance that it is really not worth mentioning. In a letter from my father on his arrival in New York, in 1822, he congratulates himself on his unprecedentedly rapid voyage of 'only thirty-six days,' while now a passage of nine days actually is considered as tedious. Who shall say that I may not live to run over in twenty-four hours? At all events I sincerely hope that this may not prove my last visit. I have had a delightful time, and look forward, if my health continues, to its repetition, so that you are liable to have me popping in upon you at any moment, when I hope you will be as glad to see me as I shall be to return. After twelve months of uninterrupted success at the Antipodes, I have passed twelve equally successful months in the United States, and am proud to record that for six months of that time I have played to unvarying good houses in New York alone. While returning my hearty thanks to the public for the favour with

which I have been received, I must not forget another duty I have to perform, and that is to express my deep sense of the great cordiality and cheerful assistance I have experienced from the members of my own profession—from managers, actors, and, indeed, from everyone with whom I have been associated during my tour, for I can honestly declare that I never met with more uniform politeness and attention in my life. As to my good friend Wallack, what shall I say? Words are inadequate to express the affectionate appreciation I entertain of his unceasing endeavour and those of his amiable family to conduce to my happiness and comfort. Years ago, when he first entered the profession, it appears that I chanced to offer him some encouragement, and it shows that kind words are never thrown away, for he has been gracious enough to remember them; and if I cheered him a little at the commencement of his career, he has more than returned the obligation by throwing flowers over the close of mine. I shall bear away with me the liveliest remembrance of his many kindnesses. I will not detain you longer, ladies and gentlemen, but tender you once more my grateful thanks for the undeviating favour and patronage with which you have honoured me, and, with the sincerest assurance that I shall for ever treasure the recollection of the happy days I have spent among you, I bid you, most respectfully, farewell."

APPENDIX B.

List of plays performed during Mathews's managements of Covent Garden and the Lyceum, drawn up by himself, and found among his papers:

COVENT GARDEN, SEASON 1839-40.

TRAGEDIES.	No. of times played.
Hamlet	3
Ion	2
Romeo and Juliet	5
COMEDIES.	
Love's Labour's Lost	9
School for Scandal	16
Rule a Wife	5
Country Squire	2
Rivals	15
John Bull	6
Clandestine Marriage	3
Double Gallant	12
Wonder	2
Baronet	1
Much Ado about Nothing	1
Know Your Own Mind	3
As You Like It	2
Merry Wives	11
Twelfth Night	4
Belle's Stratagem	1
Faint Heart, &c.	2
Youthful Queen	
Secret Service	4
Dr. Dilworth	4
Scapegoat	2
Queen's Horse	3
Ask No Questions	5
Why did You Die?	1
Don't be Frightened	2
My Neighbour's Wife	4
High Life Below Stairs	1

PANTOMIMES AND MELODRAMAS.	No. of times played.
Great Bed of Ware	48
Fortunate Isles (masque)	20
Champs Elysées (ballet)	14
Sleeping Beauty	35
INTERLUDES.	
Advice Gratis	2
Twice Killed	4
Bengal Tiger	1
Printer's Devil	6
Chaos is Come Again	4
Quiet Day	2
Shocking Events	1

To Friday, May 29, inclusive.

PLAYS.	
Love	51
Legend of Florence	13
Hunchback	1
OPERAS.	
Artaxerxes	12
Duenna	5
Mabel	1
Beggar's Opera	41
Love in a Village	2
Lord of the Manor	1

MUSICAL AFTERPIECES.	No. of times played.
Patter v. Clatter	17
He would be an Actor	5
Loan of a Lover	5
Two Figaros	2
One Hour	8
Waterman	2
Why don't You Marry?	2

FARCES.	No. of times played.
Alive and Merry	12
Naval Engagements	4
Handsome Husband	1
You can't Marry your Grandmother	1
Sons and Systems	3
Ringdoves	7

COVENT GARDEN, SEASON 1840-1.

COMEDIES.	No. of times played.
Merry Wives	28
Twelfth Night	1
School for Scandal	3
Rivals	4
Spanish Curate	21
John Bull	1
Fashionable Arrivals	20
White Milliner	10
London Assurance	69
Critic	14

PLAYS.	
Love	2
Bride of Messina	18
Midsummer Night's Dream	59

OPERAS.	
Beggar's Opera	12
Fra Diavolo	5

MUSICAL AFTERPIECES.	
Sleeping Beauty	15
Greek Boy	17
He would be an Actor	1
Patter v. Clatter	1
Waterman	1
Beauty and the Beast	45

FARCES.	
Twice Killed	4
Shocking Events	2
Ringdoves	2
Simpson and Co.	5
First Floor	5
Brother Ben	19
Captain of the Watch	6
Two in the Morning	43
A Quiet Day	3
Secret Service	1

PANTOMIMES AND MELODRAMAS.	
Castle of Otranto	55
Embassy	12
Auld Robin Gray (ballet)	1

To Thursday, June 3, 1841. Last night of season.

COVENT GARDEN, SEASON 1841-2.

COMEDIES.	No. of times played.
London Assurance	7
Rivals	6
Merry Wives	6
She Would and She Would Not	8
What will the World Say?	18
Old Maids	16
School for Scandal	4
Court and City	15
Wives as They Were	7
Irish Heiress	2
Bubbles of the Day	15

PLAYS.	No. of times played.
Midsummer Night's Dream	11
OPERAS.	
Beggar's Opera	2
Fra Diavolo	7
Norma	42
Elena Uberti	15
Marriage of Figaro	10
Sonnambula	3
MUSICAL AFTERPIECES.	
Beauty and the Beast	6
Poor Soldier	6
Comus	18
White Cat	18
Charles XII.	10
FARCES.	
Patter v. Clatter	7
Brother Ben	8
Caught Napping	1
Animal Magnetism	5
Critic	10
Popping the Question	7
Wrong Man	10
Irish Tutor	2
Omnibus	6
Free and Easy	12
United Service	7
Simpson and Co.	1
Ringdoves	2
My Wife's Mother	1
PANTOMIMES, BALLETS, &c.	
Hans of Iceland (ballet)	22
Wooden Leg	15
Guy, Earl of Warwick	48

To Saturday, April 16, inclusive.

LYCEUM, SEASON 1847-8.

	No. of times played.
Pride of the Market (new)	36
Light Dragoons (new)	15
Brother Ben	3
Two Queens	15
Box and Cox (new)	116
Used Up	15
Mathews and Co.	11
Rough Diamond (new)	60
Sovereign Remedy	3
Patter v. Clatter	3
Curious Case	12
Peggy Green (new)	20
Ringdoves	6
Tragedy Queen (new)	41
Golden Branch (new)	81
Astounding Phenomena (new)	15
Done on Both Sides (new)	28
Not a Bad Judge (new)	42
Happy Family (new)	12
Theseus and Ariadne (new)	44
Scarecrow (new)	33
Fast Man (new)	12
Anything for a Change (new)	35
Beggar's Opera	23
Captain of the Watch	8
Tutor's Assistant	14
Speaking Likeness	2
Love in a Village	1
Poor Pillicoddy (new)	14
Blue Beard	11
Somebody Else	1

To Friday, July 28, 1848. Last night of the season (including extra nights).

LYCEUM, SEASON 1848-9.

	No. of times played.
Anything for a Change	35
Court Beauties	38
Critic	43
Peculiar Position	27

	No. of times played.
My Father did so before Mo (new)	36
Used Up	32
Tragedy Queen	4
Free and Easy	7
Merry Wives of Windsor	15
Curious Case	3
Two Owls in One Ivy Bush (new)	1
An Appeal to the Public (new)	72
King of the Peacocks (new)	71
Who Speaks First? (new)	40
Shave you Directly (new)	16
Romantic Idea (new)	47
Sweethearts and Wives	1
Hold your Tongue (new)	51
Box and Cox	32
Water Party	16
Seven Champions (new)	47
Husband of My Wife (new)	13
Wonderful Woman (new)	43
Kill or Cure	17
Promotion	17
Amateurs and Actors	13
Patter v. Clatter	2
Inkle and Yarico	1
Guy Mannering	5
Captain of the Watch	2
Auld Robin Gray	1
School for Scandal	2
One Hour	6
Day after the Wedding	2
Model of a Wife	1
Raising the Wind	1
Printer's Devil	4
Beggar's Opera	2
Race for a Dinner	1
Follies of a Night	1

To Monday evening, July 30. Last night of season.

LYCEUM, SEASON 1849-50.

	No. of times played.
Sentinel	11
Follies of a Night	21
Garrick Fever	14
Box and Cox	25
Appeal to the Public	26
Affair of Honour	3
Anything for a Change	3
Lady in Difficulties (new)	16
Used Up	9
Wonderful Woman	9
Practical Man (new)	109
Discharge your Tiger (new)	6
Beauty and the Beast	20
Not a Bad Judge	23
Methinks I see my Father (new)	26
Critic	2
Drop the Curtain (new)	4
Delicate Ground (new)	20
Raising the Wind	17
He would be an Actor	31
Beggar's Opera	3
Island of Jewels (new)	135
Patter v. Clatter	7
Captain of the Watch	2
Charles XII.	33
Curious Case	4
Two in the Morning	30
Who Speaks First?	1
Why did You Die?	3
Cymon and Iphigenia (new)	32
Barber Bravo	1
Novelty Fair (new)	28
Simpson and Co.	4
Bamboozling	2
A Thumping Legacy	1
Loan of a Lover	1
Olympic Revels	1
Eton Boy	1

To Friday night, July 19, 1850. Last night of the season.

LYCEUM, SEASON 1850-1.

	No. of times played.		No. of times played.
My Heart's Idol (new)	27	King Charming (new)	238
Serve Him Right (new)	33	Box and Cox	10
Olympic Devil	24	Used Up	11
White Hoods (new)	7	Romantic Idea	17
Romance of the Rose (new)	12	Cool as a Cucumber (new)	39
Appeal to the Public	25	Queen of the Frogs (new)	41
Practical Man	27	Only a Clod (new)	90
Ringdoves	74	Court Beauties	97
A Day of Reckoning (new)	44	Raising the Wind	1
Simpson and Co.	6	Game of Speculation	10
Forty and Fifty	2	To Monday, October 13, 1851. Last night of the season.	
Handsome Husband	47		

LYCEUM, SEASON 1851-2.

	No. of times played.		No. of times played.
Game of Speculation	94	Chain of Events (new)	59
Forty and Fifty	8	Taking by Storm (new)	23
Practical Man	9	Very Suspicious (new)	6
Prince of Happy Land (new)	79	To Wednesday, June 30, 1852. Last night of the season (including extra nights.)*	
Simpson and Co.	1		
Family Jars	3		

LYCEUM, SEASON 1852-3.

	No. of times played.		No. of times played.
Mysterious Lady (new)	4	Little Toddlekins (new)	86
Golden Fleece	19	Good Woman in the Wood (new)	77
House out of Windows (new)	61	Strange History (new)	11
Taking by Storm	23	A.S.S. (new)	47
Used Up	41	Fast Train (new)	46
Game of Speculation	11	Trying It On (new)	48
Anything for a Change	5	Critic	6
Married Daughters	15	Lawyers (new)	39
Those dear Blacks (new)	14	Wonderful Woman	10
Chain of Events	8	To Monday night, July 4, 1853. Last night of the season.	
Practical Man	8		
The Jenkinses	10		
A Phenomenon in a Smock Frock (new)	70		

LYCEUM, SEASON 1853-4.

	No. of times played.		No. of times played.
Curious Case	14	Wright at Last (new)	41
Commencement of a Bad Farce (new)	14	Little Toddlekins	11
		Game of Speculation	4

* The list of this season's performances appears to be defective.

	No. of times played.
How to Make Home Happy (new)	35
Patter v. Clatter	79
Nice Firm (new)	41
Bachelor of Arts (new)	85
Once Upon a Time (now)	83
Charming Widow (new)	46
No. 1 Round the Corner (new)	28
Wanted a She-wolf (new)	7
House out of Windows	14
Used Up	7
Give a Dog an Ill Name (new)	30
Serve Him Right	2
Before Breakfast	20
Trying It On	6
Sunshine through the Clouds (new)	20
Gentleman Opposite (new)	3
Ringdoves	1
Box and Cox	1

To end of season, and extra nights.

LYCEUM, SEASON 1854-5.

	No. of times played.
Game of Speculation	9
Comical Countess (new)	26
My Fellow Clerk	22
Aggravating Sam (new)	67
Two Heads are Better than One (new)	57
Prince Prettypet (new)	57
Too Much of a Good Thing (new)	17
Little Toddlekins	1
Used Up	3
Nice Firm	3
Take that Girl away	9

To Wednesday night, March 14.

The following list of plays, in which Mathews had acted, was furnished by him to the *London Figaro*, in which journal it originally appeared. It is curious that five pieces should have been omitted; two of them, at least, being of considerable importance. They are—"Black Sheep," "Escaped from Portland," "The Day After the Wedding," "Not such a Fool as he Looks," and "The Way to Get Married."

The pieces marked with an asterisk were written by Mathews; and those to which a dagger is affixed contained parts of which he was the original exponent.

NINE ACTS.

Strange History †

EIGHT ACTS.

Chain of Events *—†

FIVE ACTS.

Belle's Stratagem
Bubbles of the Day †
Bold Stroke for a Wife
Busy Body

Confederacy
Court and City †
Cure for the Headache
Double Gallant
Fox Chase
John Bull
Irish Heiress †
Know Your Own Mind
London Assurance †
My Lord and My Lady †
Merry Wives of Windsor
Moonshine †
Old Maids †
Old Heads and Young Hearts †
Othello
Rivals
Rule a Wife and Have a Wife
Road to Ruin
Secrets worth Knowing
Spanish Curate
Savannah *—†
School for Scandal
Time Works Wonders †
Twelfth Night
Wives as they Were
Way of the World

THREE ACTS.

Belle's Stratagem
Busy Body
Black Book
Black Domino *—†
Cure for the Heartache
Clarissa Harlowe †
Contested Election †
Dangerous Friend †
Day of Reckoning †
Dead for a Ducat *
Everybody's Friend †
Faces in the Fire †
From Grave to Gay †
Game of Speculation †
How will They get out of It ? †
Know Your Own Mind
Lawyers †
Lessons in Love †
Lord of the Manor
Love's Telegraph †
Lady in Difficulties †
Little Devil †
Married for Money *—†
Milliner to the King *—†
Match for a King *—†
Overland Route †
Paul Pry
Soft Sex *—†
Silken Fetters †
Sibylla †
Silver Lining †
Tale of a Coat †
Woman of the World †
What will the World say ? †

TWO ACTS.

Aggravating Sam *—†
Alive and Merry †
Adventures of a Billet Doux †
Baronet †
Bachelor of Arts *—†
Bachelor's Wife †
Before Breakfast
Beggar's Opera
Beauty and the Beast
Barrack Room
Curious Case †
Court Favor †
Cymon and Iphigenia †
Court Beauties
Charles XII.
Critic
Carlo *—†
Country Squire
Court Jester *
Dream of the Future †
Don't be Frightened †
Duel
Dying for a Kiss †
Follies of a Night †
Free and Easy
Fashionable Arrivals †
Golden Fleece †
Grist to the Mill †
Guardians Outwitted
Happy Family †

Husband of my Wife †
Impudent Puppy *—†
King of the Frogs †
King Charming
Kill Him Again *—†
Light Dragoons †
Liar
My Awful Dad *—†
My Heart's Idol †
My Wife's Mother *
Mysterious Lady †
Not a Bad Judge †
Naval Engagements †
Old and Young Stagers
Puss in Boots †
Pong Wong *
Rencontre
Riquet with the Tuft †
Rape of the Lock †
Serve him Right *—†
Sleeping Beauty †
Seven Champions †
Striking Likenesses *
Take that Girl away *—
Too Late for Dinner
Two Figaros †
Those dear Blacks
Tutor's Assistant †
Theseus and Ariadne
Used Up †
United Service †
White Hood †
Wrong Man †
Who Killed Cock Robin? *—†
Who's your Friend †
Woodcock's Little Game †
White Milliner
Youthful Queen

ONE ACT.

Appeal to the Public †
Antony and Cleopatra †
Anything for a Change †
Astounding Phenomena †
Brother Ben †
Box and Cox
Barber Bravo †
Bull in a China Shop †
Cool as a Cucumber †
Captain of the Watch †
Charming Widow †
Cousin German *—†
Chaos is Come Again
Comical Countess †
Cosy Couple †
Cherry and Blue *—†
Commencement of a Bad Farce †
Delicate Ground †
Drama's Levee †
Drama at Home †
Dowager *—†
Dreamer †
Deaf Lover
Done on Both Sides †
Drop the Curtain †
Day Well-Spent
Eton Boy †
Fast Man †
Fast Train †
Faust †
Faint Heart Never Won Fair Lady †
First Floor
Give a Dog an Ill Name †
Great Gun Trick †
Gentleman Opposite †
He would be an Actor *—†
How to make Home Happy †
Humpbacked Lover *—†
Hold your Tongue †
Handsome Husband †
House Room
Hasty Conclusion †
His Excellency *—†
I will have an Uncle †
If I had £1000 a Year †
Little Toddlekins *—†
Late Lamented †
Lying made Easy
Loan of a Lover
Locomotion
Ladder of Love †
My Mother's Maid *—†
Mathews and Co. *—†

Methinks I See my Father *—†
Mr. Gatherwool †
My Usual Luck *—†
Nice Firm †
Novelty Fair †
News from China †
Number One Round the Corner †
Nothing to Wear *—†
One Hour †
Original
Only a Clod †
Olympic Revels
One too Many for Him †
Patter v. Clatter *—†
Paul Pry Married and Settled *—†
Practical Man †
Phenomenon in a Smock Frock †
Perfection
Peggy Green
Pyramus and Thisbe *
Ringdoves *—†
Romantic Idea †
Shave you Directly †
Sentinel †
Somebody Else †
Speaking Likeness †
Sovereign Remedy †
Trying It On †
Three and the Deuce
Taking by Storm †
Twenty Minutes with a Tiger †
Two in the Morning *—†
Two can Play at that Game
Too Kind by Half *—†
Wolf and the Lamb *—†
Wanted a She-Wolf †
Why did You Die? *—†
Who Speaks First? †
Why don't You Marry?
You're Another *—†
You can't Marry your Grandmother †

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